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GAMER

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"Instantly enjoyable"

Official XBOX Magazine



PREPARE TO BE HUNTED



SPY HUNTER

PlayStation 2



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this away? Because we're mad
as a box of frogs.
Nurse, the screens!

xbox insider

102 XBOX LIVEXbox online: where, when, how much it'll cost,
and why it'll make you cry sweet tears of joy.**114 POST APOCALYPSE**A magazine is nothing without its readers. Here's
the bit where you tell it like it is.**116 BURNING QUESTIONS**Soothe your worries away with the sweet, cool
balm of our impartial and well-informed knowledge.
Or maybe just read the words. S'up to you.**118 SUBSCRIBE**

Find out how you can get three copies a year FREE!

120 GAME ONAn exhibition? Of videogames? At *The Barbican*? Join
us as we don turtle-necks and get all arty-farty.**122 GIZZA JOB**Our Al Bickham explains the life of the freelance writer.
It's not all *Countdown* and *Trisha*, y'know. Well, a bit.**123 THE MAKING OF...***Project Ego*. It's really coming along now.**124 THE LOWDOWN ON...**

The hellish, heaving sweat-pit of games that was E3.

126 CAPTION COMPOThe very kind of televisions is yours for the taking...
just impress us with your saucy wit and repartee.

regulars

68 HI-SCORE

How the team is fairing in the scores department.

70 HIT LIST

What's hot and what's snot.

74 TACKLESore thumbs? You need a new pad, you do. Or at least,
better hand-to-eye coordination when closing doors.**78 STAYING ALIVE**

Games giving you grief? Crack those bad boys.

128 NEXT MONTH

Better than this month? Surely it can't be possible?

130 BADVERTStranded on a desert island? Here's the X-balm to
cure all yo' Robinson Crusoe ills.

feature

102 XBOX LIVEGlobal war is coming to Xbox.
People have been wiffing for years
about online gaming, but only
Microsoft is making it happen.
Find out how in our epic feature.

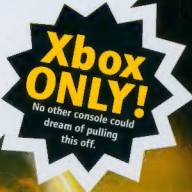
>> Sweet mercy...

THE MOOLAHWhat the service will cost you,
in cold, hard cash. You'll be
pleasantly surprised.**THE GAMES**There's an immense line-up
of quality titles in the pipeline.
Join us as we bask in the warm
glow of anticipation.**BUT WHEN?**Sooner than you think. Read
on, and start planning a life
of online glory...**HALO
MULTIPLAYER TIPS 82****DO NOT MISS...****HOT GAMES LOVE!** Check out *Deus Ex 2*, *Splinter
Cell*, *Blink* and *Steel Battalion* on the exotic **Page 36****GRIP IT!** Joypads under scrutiny on **Page 74**

start

BLISTERING SHOOT-'EM-UP ACTION RAMPED UP TO THE NEXT GENERATION, PANZER DRAGOON ORTA DEMONSTRATES THE PLANET-SHATTERING POWER OF XBOX!

The future's shining like a huge green star. We return from the biggest games show on Earth to bring you the full story on the world of Xbox—get ready to be happy...



XGAMER

editor's letter

Being an Xbox owner right now is to nurse a giraffe-sized neck-strain, inflicted by peering around the corner in expectation of the great games ahead. We're still living in the shadow of the launch. All the major developers shot their game-bolts early and it's taking time for them to unleash the next blast.

That's why our preview pages are the place to be right now. They're the fruit of our trip to E3, the biggest videogame show of the year. I wish every Xbox gamer could have been there, because it was a stirring sight to behold. Quality Xbox games were coming out the goddamn walls; games that will make us all proud to own an

Xbox. The confirmation of *Halo 2* and *Metal Gear Substance* (as revealed in *XGamer* 02 and 03), were obvious highlights, but what also impressed me was the class of the less hyped titles. *Panzer Dragoon* looks stunning. I accidentally demolished a tower block with a casual spray of missiles in *Mech Assault*; was charmed by *Blinx* and spent ages slipping spy-cams under doors in *Splinter Cell*—the nerve-nibbling, stealth thriller from Ubisoft. What's more, Xbox Live looks like an online winner and *Steel Battalions* is the most deranged game we've ever seen. Can't wait. **X**

Mark Donald Editor
xgamer@futurenet.co.uk



select

28 METAL GEAR SOLID ON XBOX

A cardboard box full of info as Snake slithers out of the shadows to deliver the bite of the century.

48 TIMESPLITTERS 2

A sumptuous feast of first-person shooting that had us rolling around the floor pestering passers-by for a tickle.

102 XBOX LIVE

Epic feature on the new games arena that'll have Xboxes chattering over the world. Don't go online without it.

FALLING TO PIECES A panel breaks off, the engine explodes and it's permanent bedtime for this plasma fodder enemy.

TURN OVER AND LET THE GAMES BEGIN...

HELL'S TEETH! ACTUAL IN-GAME SCREENSHOT!

THE ILLUMINATIONS The whole screen is a fully charged neon-drenched lightshow. Make sure you're wearing shades before playing this bright baby.

PUFF THE MAGIC DRAGON Your Dragon will be hammering through the game at incredible speeds—it can change shape, giving you different strengths and weaknesses.

GAME **PANZER DRAGON ORTA** TRIPPING THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

SCENE Blasting through an ancient ruin in full fight with the enemy at large
WEAPON Laser cannons with enough voltage to power Tokyo for a month
FEELING "C'mon... I'll take you all!"

WANT SOME MORE? SEE OUR TOP XBOX GAMES MINI MAG

first contact

A furtive poke at the games on the horizon

JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE

- ✕ James is back to canoodle with some lady villains
- ✕ Greenpeace lunatic wants world to himself
- ✕ Bond adds 'stealth' to his anti-terrorist arsenal



The secret agent that never grows old is cocking his shooters and shooting his cocker as he prepares to take down another lunatic bent on global domination. This time it's first-personal.

Like *Agent Under Fire*, *Nightfire*'s another instalment in the non-film Bond saga. Rafael Drake is the madman of the moment, leader of a Greenpeace-style environmental group campaigning for a cleaner planet. Thing is, the only reason he wants it spick and span is because he's intent on squeezing our big blue 'n' green rock into his pocket, all for himself. Thank the sweet Lord lady-killing super agent James Bond has retained his licence to kill so he can put an end to this cretinous wretchery. That's where you come in.

PUSSY GALORE

On Bond's quest to nail the greedy bleeder, you'll visit more exotic locations than Judith Chalmers, bouncing through zero-gravity space levels, swimming the shark-infested south Pacific, and skiing in the snow-topped Alps. Best of all, you'll even get to thrash around in Bond's favourite jam-jars.

WHAT IF?

The Bond girls were only as fit as your gaming performance? Do it cool, J.Lee. Do it half-arsed, Maggie Thatcher.

Expect the usual Bond-sized barrage of high-action blasting and lots of stealth to boot. Yes, sometimes it will pay to whip out your zipline instead of simply unloading a clip in a baddie's face.

Zoe Nightshade of *Agent Under Fire* fame will make another appearance to create a feeling of continuity between the non-film chapters and there'll be a fresh range of all new Q gadget's to fiddle with.

Our sources at EA are also promising interactive third-person scenes to give a new angle on the action. Details so far are strictly hush-hush, but expect a full report when we get Hands On with it. Let's just hope *Nightfire* performs better than *Agent Under Fire*. ✕

Developer

Eurocom

Release Winter

Genre

Publisher EA

First-person-shooter

For more...

0870 243 2435

www.ea.com



Shoot first, shag later. Bond introduces himself to a henchman by blowing his brains out—the charmer.



A guard asks for a light, so Bond shows him his new watch/lighter combo gadget. How do you like them apples?



TRACK RECORD

This is Eurocom's first next generation outing, but the company certainly has a past...

>> **GOOD**

Crash Bash
(PS1, 2000)

>> **AVERAGE**

NBA Hoopz
(PS1, PS2, DC, 2001)
The World Is Not Enough
(PS1, N64, 2000)
NBA Showtime
(PS1, N64, 1999)

>> **POOR**

Atlantis
(PS1, GBC, 2001)



It's a Mexican stand off. Or rather, you both open fire, you lose energy and he dies. Perk of being the hero.



Hold tight now. This Lunatic's gaff's proving a pain in the arse to enter so a bit of rope work is needed.

first contact

DEAD OR ALIVE XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL

- Female fighters in volleyball frenzy
- Dirty Zack hosts all-girl Baywatch party
- Xbox advanced breast bouncing physics



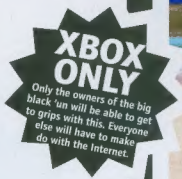
That Zack's a bit of a rum 'un. He's only gone and bought a tropical island, pretended to promote the fourth *Dead Or Alive* tournament and sneakily left all the fellas off the invite list—just so he can keep all the totty to himself. Naturally, the girls get bored and start playing volleyball. In their bikinis.

All the original *DOA* ladies have swapped their fighting clobber for swimsuits—plus we get to meet the all-new Lisa, a US volleyball champ who's on hand to teach the fighters a bit of ball control.

PLEASURE ISLAND Zack's furnished his fantasy island out with all sorts of mini-games. There's an arcade where you can play a mini-version of *DOA3*, a movie theatre where you can watch Tecmo game trailers and a casino with *DOA* themed fruit-machines and card games. You'll even be able to enter dance and beauty pageants as well as practise a bit of lifeguarding—it's the Pamela Anderson game you've always dreamed of. Only these girls are real.

You can even develop relationships with other ladies—buy your mate a gift and she may buy you one back. How far these relationships can go is unclear, but there's no news on an Ann Summers endorsement yet.

With over 100 swimsuits to slobber over and a local radio-station broadcasting licensed tunes, this could turn out to be the beach party you've always dreamed of getting an invite to. Put the Speedos on standby. **XX**



Developer Tecmo Release Summer
Publisher Tecmo/Microsoft Genre Volleyball
For more... 0870 601 0100 www.tecmogames.com



Hitomi is told to make a double-fist and whack the ball. It's volleyball, see...



Special, next-gen physics will make the breast motion very real. Now that's the appliance of science.



It's like *Fantasy Island* (but without that weird little dwarf fella).



Ayane's looking mighty fine, and is that a Playboy Bunny hat she's wearing?



Sunglasses, bikinis and suntan lotion will sculpt your honey to perfection.



TRACK RECORD

Tecmo's most famous games involve being dead or alive. It's also been behind a few bizarre Japanese games that have got less chance of hitting Britain than a full sunny week...

>> GOOD

Fatal Frame
(PS2, 2002)
Dead Or Alive 3
(Xbox, 2002)
Dead Or Alive 2
(PS2, DC, 2000)
Monster Rancher 3

>> POOR

Unson
(PS2, 2001)
Gallop Racer 2001
(PS2, 2001)




Hitomi takes a rest from the volleyball to try her hand at marketing.



To clear the sand from her G-string Hitomi gets up for more ball action.



The Xbox is being used to advertise tampons. "Woosooaaaah Bodyfumi!"



TRACK RECORD

Neversoft is as trustworthy as a well-trained Labrador.

➤ **GOOD**
Tony Hawk's 3
 (Xbox, 2002)
Tony Hawk's 2
 (Multi-format, 2000)
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater
 (Multi-format, 1999)

➤ **AVERAGE**
Spider-Man
 (Xbox, PC, PS2, 2002)



The new Spine Transfer allows you to easily flip between cows without having to push forward. Very handy indeed that.



Our flip-wristed hero takes a set of stairs the speedy way. Or has he been frozen by a freak Antarctic wind?

first contact

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

FIRST
PICS!

- ✕ Spanking new career progression mode
- ✕ Rammed with mini-game madness
- ✕ Zero time limits to curb your gnarliness



We first clapped eyes on this stunner last month, and now we've grabbed the first Xbox shots and a full play of *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4*. It's still early days, in fact the game isn't due until Christmas, but it looks and feels like a new high for the classy skateboarding series.

Added to familiar physics and outrageous trick combos, the new features such as the Spine Transfer which allows you to flip between bowls easily, mean the game is different enough to get even hardened fans of *Tony 3* slobbering

OUCH THAT HURT!

Tony 4 certainly looks far bigger than earlier versions, with expansive, highly populated environments to scrape, grind and generally prance about in. Nailing every single gap will be harder than ever, expanding the replay value even further.

That's where the absence of a time limit really comes into its own. You no longer feel hurried when

you decide to explore a small area. Instead you'll exploit a golden trick point for ages before moving on in search of another obstacle...

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

The interactive challenges are shaping up very nicely too, as there are tons of skaters hanging around waiting to set you off on a mission. We bumped into one pro skater who dared us to beat his score, while several other famous faces loitered nearby ready to take us on if we got tired of our challenge.

The skater animations are vastly improved, with far more ball-clutching bails than ever before and, best of all, the repertoire of tricks is extended to match the ever-more-outrageous manoeuvres of the real-life skaters.

This might be a revision rather than a revolution as far as gameplay goes, but the greater polish, sweeter graphics and fresh levels should have you yelping. ✕

Developer Neversoft
Publisher Activision

Release
December
Genre Extreme Sports

For more...
01753 756 100
www.activision.com



Is that the Golden Gate Bridge glistening in the background? Hmm... I could grind that with a bit of a run up.



Wendy the elephant quivers behind a rock as Tony gets grindin'. Is this evidence of a brand new Bristol Zoo level?

first contact

STAR WARS: GALAXIES

XBOX LIVE
Play with up to 16 friends online
Free to play
PlayStation 3 version also available

- ☒ Use Broadband to reach the stars
- ☒ Be a Wookiee, Jedi or Ewok
- ☒ Battle thousands of human foes



That Broadband port'll soon be able to plug you directly into the weird and wonderful *Star Wars* universe.

Set between *A New Hope* and *Empire Strikes Back*, *Star Wars: Galaxies* will let thousands of people roam the films' planets, gawping at the locals from a first-person or isometric view. It's easy to forget this is a meaty RPG when there is so much tourism to be done, such as sand-spotting on Tatooine or ice skating on Hoth.

THE UNIVERSE AND BEYOND

The action of the game has a tactical edge based on skills that you can pick up or learn. You can become everything from a hairdresser to a Jedi, although only if you have the most serious mind (and about 500 hours spare for either vocation).

Get bored and you can hop planets via pre-set space-ports in *Star Wars*-style spacecraft. In fact, the entire universe will be continuously expanding as the developers build more planets and invent new characters for you to play with.

With world politics, voting, galactic trading and mass battles of good vs evil, this could turn out to be the most immersive, addictive game ever. Just make sure you remember to wash once in a while. ☒

Developer LucasArts

Publisher
Verant/Sony Online

Release November

Genre
Online RPG

For more...

01753 756 100
<http://starwarsgalaxies.station.sony.com/>



Sometimes, even the Empire giant AT-ATs are under threat from the gigantic beasts that roam the plains.



You can dress your character exactly how you want him. Now that's just cruel.



Every creature from the film (and a few we've not seen) will be roaming wild.



At Mos Eisley, all the usual scum and villainy will be out to play



Howdy fellow carpers. You'll even be able to be a female Wookiee. Phwoar.



Imagine getting behind the wheel of this baby. It's gonna happen!



TRACK RECORD

As odd as it might seem, Sony is having a hand in this baby! It has joined forces as co-developers with Verant is who's had a fair bit of experience in the constant gaming universe field...

-- GOOD

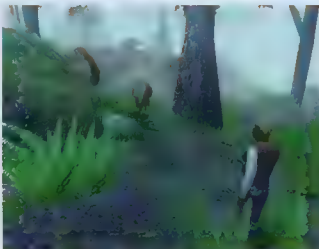
EverQuest
(PC, 1999)

-- AVERAGE

Ultima Online
(PC, 1997)



These flying beasts will no doubt have a purpose. Burgers, maybe?



You'd better be tooled up at times like this, they have a tendency to eat you.



You can visit a barber and get a flat-top. Perfect for butch ladies.



TRACK RECORD

Japanese developer Anchor hasn't been around that long, with only two games that made an appearance over here...

>> GOOD

Ultimate Fighting Championship
(DC, 2000)

>> AVERAGE

WWF RAW
(Xbox, 2002)



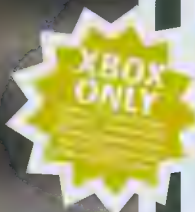
A spectator with a sense of humour throws a quid into the ring. Scramble!



The 'statue at Rio' manoeuvre tends to go down well in the Deep South...



Rob Van Dam rudely refuses this greaser's kind offer of a seat.



first contact

WWE RAW 2

- ❑ Raw gets even rawer
- ❑ Brutal battery, like an aggressive Duracell
- ❑ More wrestlers, bigger man-breasts

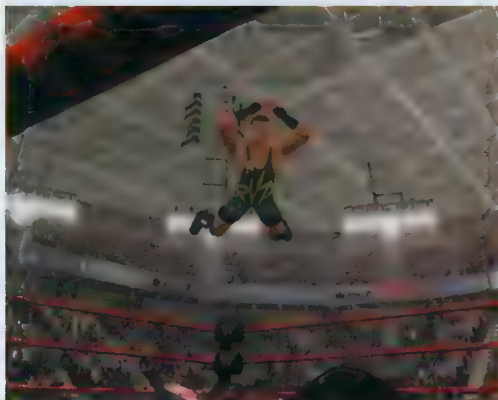


The pantomime gorillas—aka wrestlers—are beating their chests and flexing their pecs as they prepare to re-enter the glorious fighting ring for another bout of raw bum-slapping. And with

XGamer awarding both *Raw* (XGamer 03) and Acclaim's *Legends Of Wrestling* (see page 58) the same 5/10 medal of mediocrity, the championship title belt for Greatest Xbox Wrestling Game is still waiting to be claimed.

So, with it all to play for, Hollywood's Hulk Hogan, Rob Van Dam, Ric Flair, Diamond Dallas Page and the New World Order have all made it to the new roster of fighters. Joining the original exhibition match modes is the king of the ring and ladders and chairs mode. The hard drive is also having its gigs tickled with a custom soundtrack system that'll let you design your own grand entrances and save them for later.

FLAT OUT While *WWF Raw* was flawed, its problems could easily be ironed out for the second instalment, so here's hoping. THQ insiders are suggesting that the play-control has undergone major tweekage and that the popular create-a-superstar mode is being updated. Keep your peep-holes on the Hands On section for more as it comes in **X**



RVD gets zapped by a stray alien tractor beam while demonstrating his famous sniffing-empties routine.



A Drew Barrymore lookalike prepares to indulge in some serious rings-shuffling anarchy...

❑ Developer Anchor ❑ Release Early 2003 ❑ For more...
❑ Publisher THQ ❑ Genre Wrestling ❑ 01483 767 656
www.thq.co.uk

surveillance

XGAMER's news ferrets sniff the trousers of truth

trace victory

THE HEAT IS ON

The Xbox fires on three fronts to seize the advantage in the console war...



Microsoft came out fighting at last month's E3 games bonanza to prove millions

of gamers right—Xbox is the console to own. A string of exciting Xbox revelations were made...

briefs

► **Star Wars Battlefront** is a mission-based, player-on-player action game. The game is set in the world of the film, in which tens of thousands of players can meet, fight and see pictures, its graphics, music, with collections, will be working hard, with the Wachowskis' efforts, the last one of the...
...the last one of the...
...the last one of the...

THE GAMES

First and foremost, the company revealed that a staggering 300 Xbox games are currently in development; an unprecedented choice. Worldwide exclusives such as *Star Wars: Knights Of The Old Republic* and *Blimx: Time Sweepers* lead the line. Behind them, a raft of top sequels and original titles, many of which will debut on Xbox.

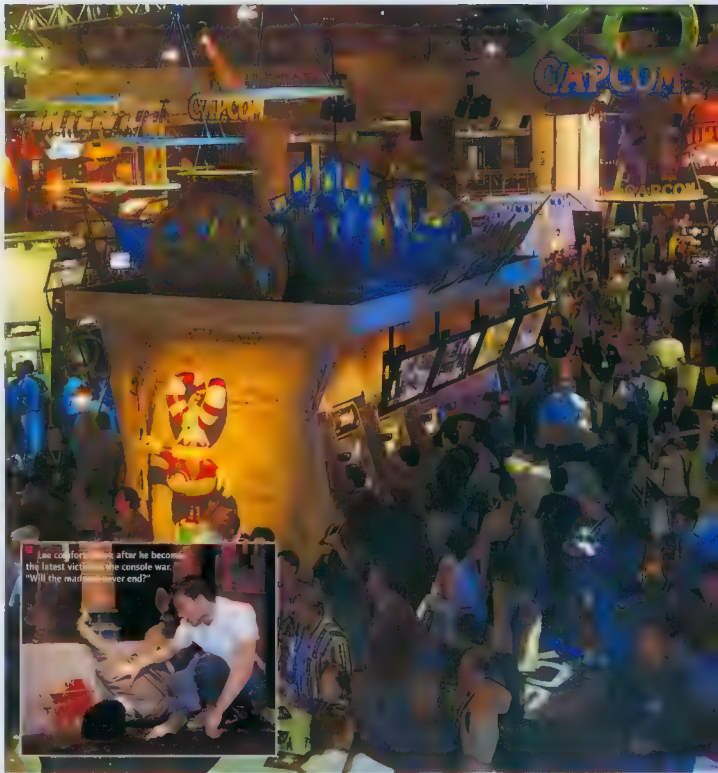
THE NET

Next up are Microsoft's online plans for its Xbox Live service. Details of a single ID per user, Xbox Communicator voice interaction over the Internet and high-speed connections are exciting enough. But best of all is the news that one year's subscription, plus an Xbox Communicator and a game, will cost £50 or less in the UK.

THE MONEY

Underlying Microsoft's commitment to the success of Xbox Live, which it believes will lead the way for Xbox supremacy, is a \$2billion war. This will ensure the service is in place before Xmas across the world and that Xbox Live continues to develop.

What a month for Xbox. What a time to own an Xbox. **X**




WIRED> Classic PlayStation racer *Micro Machines* announced > Double break: *World Championship Snooker 2003* and *Break Nine Billiards* coming

25 **Get John Woo On Their Asses**
duo **The East And The West**

There has had some chips
for it. They
are awful and
when
side but when
you haven't
accidentally
because the
claim
you play any
box game, from
your favorite
any machine. The
game machine
just let you play
the games while
the more expensive
game and
Migman-X also
enable you to play
with seasonal

Want to know
broadband like a
tramp knows his
local bin? Then flick
to page 102 for our
in-depth feature—it'll
change your life
forever...

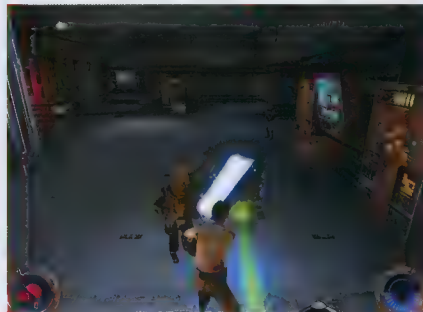
The US launches with five games: *Whacked*, *MechAssault*, *NFL Fever 2003*, *Midtown Madness 3* and, surely the juiciest of the lot, the grand FPS *Unreal Championship*. Europe will have a similar line-up. Confirmed titles to follow are *Counter-Strike* (page 21), *Halo 2* (see above news), *Project Gotham*, *Rallsport Challenge*, *Star Wars Galaxies* (page 14) and plenty more (see page 110). 

Activision announces top lightsabre action for Xbox.

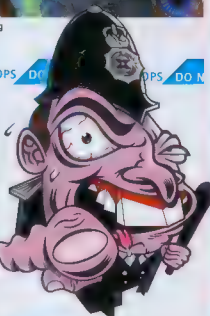


A first-person shooter, the game's set in classic era *Star Wars* rather than a that *Episode 1* and *2* business, pitting you against ruthless hordes of Stormtroopers and Imperial

Who Activision
When November



Lightsaber combat is great fun. As well as hacking limbs off alien munters, you can deflect enemy fire.



IT'S THE LAW!

For all arena-based beat-'em-ups, thou must commit the following...

LAW 1 The game will feature dozens of characters to choose from. They will range from weak-looking schoolgirls (who will always be the hardest) to hard-looking 300-pound commandos (who will always be the weakest). Every corner of the globe will be represented for territorial sales to be met.

LAW 2 Even though the game will follow a simple bout-after-bout structure, as unnecessary as it might seem, a storyline must run through the game portraying the battle of good versus evil, with some characters good, some bad, and a fearful world-annihilating apocalypse the impossible result. It doesn't matter if the player picks a bad character, just let the pre-set story beat up with goodness being the outcome. It's only a beat-'em-up, after all.

LAW 3 When you've battered the game's major bad guy, the end sequence must have him screaming like he's falling into hell (but ensure he's still healthy enough to return for a rack of inevitable sequels).

CODE OF CONDUCT

✖ The moves list must be bigger than Geoff Cape's grocery list.

- ☑ When a fight is won, he or she that is victorious will do some kind of back-flip as a way of mocking the battered one
- ☑ The opponent in your first fight must boast the AI of a toaster ☒



Copyright, so these are PC screenshots. But the Xbox version will look at least as good.

brainy grunts
FAR CRY

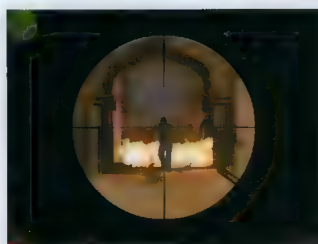


Who m.s. 11
When 270 m





Xbox LIVE
It looks like the virgin broadband port's gonna have its cherry popped—and the thought of sniping someone in the US sounds more fun than a can of never-ending Stella...



Have a guess who's about to die? The flames provide a dramatic backdrop to the action.

trace hit back

COUNTER-STRIKE: CONDITION ZERO

Become an online warrior and surf the planet looking for terrorists to shoot...



The PC's most applauded online first-person shooter is having its band broadened to take in the Xbox. Using the

Half-life engine, Counter-Strike was originally a purely online venture, with Condition Zero as the pipeline as a solo mission on strap on. But us wily Xbox owners get the lot in one neat gaming package.

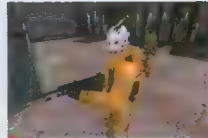
As a special forces squad leader, you travel the globe, wiping out terrorists in

glorious first person. And as with Conflict Desert Storm you have an elite squad of A-controled special forces to send in as cannon fodder on the more dangerous tasks. You'll waste to six locations, covering the cream of the world's most terrorised holiday spots. Cool old-fashioned SAS stuff all the way then, with gas masks and flares.

Surge entering the usual weaponry. Plenty of door-kicking and feather ruffling too.

The online mode will give you the chance to dive into an international battlefield and serve up a head same to all and sundry. There's a so go on to be a unique spectator Multicast option, so if you just fancy watching the action (good for weighing up opponent's tactics) place your camera down, sit back and watch it all. You're watching the telly. There's also online co-op missions which should make perfect use of the Xbox Communicator enabling you to scream orders at your team buddies. Sounds like our kinda party.

Who Microsoft.
When 2003



The Chainsaw Massacre falls makes an appearance. What a fetching flight-jacket.

briefs

Don't miss other...
...to Software...
...and ng classic...
...to continue...
...being with...
...dies adding...
...id psycho-horror...
...books absolute...
...grying to have...
...only...
...turned its...
...appearance on F...
...on or id...
...equipment...
...series comment...
...could work...
...perfectly on Xbox

CR~~X~~SS EXAMINED

Online games then... Do you care? Excited or bored? Your chance to tell us...

With a panoply (look it up) of online announcements eagerly anticipated at E3 (see story above), we thought it time to raise the multiplayer flag and see who salutes it. Answer us.

1 Are you looking forward to online multiplayer gaming?
A What's that, then?
B You bet
C Might be all right
D No

2 How much are you prepared to pay for your online service?
A Whatever it takes
B £20 or more/month
C Less than £20/month
D Nowt

3 What particular online game do you most want to play?
A Unreal Championship
B Halo 2
C Metal Gear Solid
D Draughts

4 Do you need to know more about broadband?
A Broadwhat?
B Yes, please
C I know all
D I don't care, y'hear?

Any more comments?



Send to
Future Publishing,
10 Portsmouth Street,
Barn, BA1 2BW

WIRED> Rumour update... is secret Sega racer *Grand Heat* the new *OutRun*?

briefs

▶ **Rolling thunder:** trash the traffic with a 40-ton Mac emblazoned with flower 'n' lipstick decals. Bonnet-mounted teddy optional.

trace megatonnage

BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS

HGVs cause GBH. That's BMT for you.



It's all gone a bit *Cannonball Run* at Eutechnyx's studios, where the delightfully titled *Big Mutha Truckers* is currently in development. And if driving an 18 wheeler

road-going benihemoth is your idea of a Sunday well-spent, then read on.

Thankfully, though, you won't be concerning yourself with such tedious activities as supermarket deliveries, reversing over incyclid toddlers with no road sense (when will they learn?) or deliberately overtaking uphill on a motorway, just to irritate everyone behind. No, the idea is to race other gruff, surly truckers across The States in a hooning great lorry, with big cash prizes for the fastest trucker.

Alongside your truck-bound peers, you'll also face rate drivers, arsejelly bully boy road-cops who like nothing better than to haul your monster over, and chain-smoking biker gangs. Though quite how a bearded oaf on a nag is really going to threaten a 40-ton lorry is beyond us.

Publisher Empire is hoping to have *Big Mutha Truckers* in the shops by Christmas, in keeping with the season of goodwill to all road users, no doubt. **X**

- ▶ **Who Empire**
- ▶ **When Christmas**



▶ **Rolling thunder:** trash the traffic with a 40-ton Mac emblazoned with flower 'n' lipstick decals. Bonnet-mounted teddy optional.

ARTISTIC GAME LICENCE

NO.4 IAN BEALE'S PRO WRESTLER

The pitch

Wrestling game using Albert Square as an arena. Pick either Ian Beale or Janine Butcher, don the spandex and start a totally different kind of royal rumoie.

The tagline

I ain't paying you, naffinck. Naah get aaant of here, you sinistaaaag!

The game

Set in Walford, *IBPW* opens with a cut-scene of Ian Beale buying a ticket to gain entry to East London's fifthest night-spot, touted by the naughty Janine Butcher. Janine blackmails Ian for his fish 'n' chip coins and it all kicks off. Pick your favourite character and let battle commence! Stun opponents with smart taunts ("I'll bel Laura!" and "You fat caaaaan!") cons then generate mid ring a war of dooh to gain more time. Sherbet dips for energy boosts. Select tag team to heighten the stakes. Have Mark Fowler run Janine over with his fruit 'n' veg barrow, or Billy Mitchell cut rats in Ian's underpants to cause him no end of worry.



Secrets

Finish the fight in under 20 seconds and a pride of angry lions charge the Square and use the wrestlers as screen show no respect for law or order.

Optional extras

- ▶ Blonde Bombshell cards to stick around your room
- ▶ Feline Ian Beale ex moustache to state-up with

NEXT MONTH

Daniella Westbrook's *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*

status:
first shots

The dino are bigger and nastier - so they're cranking up the heat a notch.

trace scaling up

DINO CRISIS 3

Dinosaurs in space? You read it here first...



Capcom is blasting survival horror clean into the next quadrant with its upcoming release, *Dino Crisis 3*.

The next installment in Shinji Mikami's killer series is set aboard a gigantic eco city spaceport where mutated ravenous saurians are running riot for no apparent reason. A team of intergalactic marines has been sent in to investigate, and - wouldn't you know it - they're going to have to work together if they're to stand any chance of escaping in one piece.

Whether this means you'll be in charge of a single character or an entire team is uncertain at this stage. What's clear is that this does a predictable range of rather flash futuristic weapons - our marines come

equipped with fully operational jetpacks. This'll enable you to zink about in mid-air and strafe round behind dinosaurs. It's an innovation that'll give you more options than simply standing and shooting or pegging it your only real choice in the first two *Dino Crisis* games. Plus, we're expecting a lot more freedom of movement and by dint of this, a greater sense of action, too.

We've caught wind of some on-line pay rumours, as yet unconfirmed at this stage, but they makes sense: what better way to run a team of marines than by having a human player controlling each one? Whatever the deal, it should be storming dino-obliterating fun on the fly. **X**

- ▶ **Who Capcom**
- ▶ **When Early 2003**



▶ **Mutant space raptors!** Send 'em back to hell with a sleek salvo of mini homing missiles.

WIRED> More revivals... *Tetris* from THQ and *Defender* from Sega

trace **banzai!**

NINJA GAIDEN

DOA3 makers turn their talents to Samurai swordplay.



The latest announcement from *Dead Or Alive 3* creators Team N is the sword-swinging third-person martial arts extravaganza known as *Ninja Gaiden*.

Saved vocally on the original series of games, which appeared on a variety of first-generation consoles, such as the NES, Mega Drive and PC Engine, *Ninja Gaiden* (pronounced guy-ayden) is an out-and-out 3D action game involving armed combat against multiple opponents.

In looks, at least, it's shaping up as a cross between PS2 winners *Devil May Cry* and *Fatal Fantasy*. The Sports, Action, and has you performing ultra-stylish combat moves against cyborg soldiers, supernatural horrors, and other, more earthly foes.

The demo we viewed at E3 was pretty damn fast and impressive, featuring brutal and explosive fighting in a Japanese-style setting. While it's not due to hit the shelves until 2003, we were very informed of developments as they happen. **X**

Who Team N

When Spring 2003



Resurrected from his first-gen days, Ninja Gaiden still can't resist a bit of black PVC.

trace **enemy at sea**

CRIMSON SEA

Pitch Black meets *Starship Troopers* for all-out alien blasting, and there's even a space RPG element too

The joys of building a sci-fi fantasy world. *Pitch Black* names inspired from alien road signs, alien shapes devised after a colourful pulp and madder pulp is than an S&M orgy. *Crimson Seas* an original action RPG set over the Theophrastus planetary system (well, Cardiff didn't sound right).

You get to transport a young fella on a journey of self-realisation across several weird worlds, battling up to 1,000 enemies on screen at once. Floating, underwater and warm-toned seas are marked on your map, all of which are filled to the brim with freaky-looking aliens that can morph like the T-1000 from *Terminator 2*.

Actually, the paddles look pretty too, their constant shape-shifting actually, requires



This little Lates gets annoyed when someone takes the muck out of her platform shoes.



Our hero travels to '80s Sheffield to cheer up redundant steelworkers with a mighty light-show.

You can change weapons and tactics so it's shouldn't be just a special effects gimmick. You'll have most fable futuristic weapons to bring your daughters to the slaughter, as well as special hi-tech mechs to hook up with and bang along for the ride. You'll also have psychic abilities at your fingertips, when basically means magic spells made scientific.

What does sound promising is the "Enemy Sensor System." Using minute vibrations in the oyad-and subtle sounds through Dolby's 5.1, you'll be able to hunt down hidden badies and give them a vas before they can shape-shift into your throat.

Keep a crimson eye on our sea of previews for an update. **X**

Who Core

When Christmas

WIRED> Microsoft announces caveman action game *Tork*> *Burnout 2* comingtrace **sporty spice**

ACTIVISION O2 SPORTS

Activision gears up with a trio of extreme sports games.



The new wave of stuntsporters in Activision's O2 range is on its way to Xbox, heating up the old extreme sports category, a treat. *Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2* is due on 30 August, followed shortly afterwards by *Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer* on 27 September and then *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4* on 29 November.

Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2 is currently in development at Rainbow Studio, where the programmers are said to be focusing hard on two major areas for improvement: creating masses of trick-lines to increase the replay value of any given level, and sorting the controls so they're as intuitive as possible. The bit we're looking forward to most is being able to "morph" tricks on the fly, creating completely unique stunts.

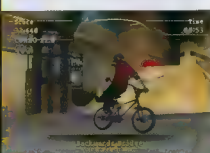
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer is a different kettle of fish altogether. Naturally, you can't just perform stunts, you need to catch a wave first. And the waves are where it's at. Each one runs for an average of three minutes, and is made up of around 14 connected sections

which are affected by dynamic tide and weather patterns. Combine this with a stack of potential tricks, and you begin to see how much larger and more varied the game could be than *Transworld Surf*.

And, finally, our old mate Tony's on the rebound for another crack at the pipes in *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4*. It's high time for a change, and that's exactly what the next instalment will bring. No more time limits on levels—you'll be able to skip about at your leisure, unlocking new goals and taking a crack at them whenever you please. Such temporal liberty seems to have been imposed by the competition, namely *Wave Mania*, *Freestyle BMX 2* and PS2's *Aggressive Inline*. All in all, a killer line-up. **X**

Who Activision

When August onwards



Mat's back: The same tricks, and more besides because you'll be able to create your own stunts.



Looks glorious, doesn't it? *Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer* should make water fun again...



Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2 features unlockable areas—success on level goals will smash down walls and reveal new ramps

WIRED> 3D mummy-basher *Maze Of The Kings* announced from the makers of *House Of The Dead 3*> Board game *Risk* set for Xbox conversion

box top 10

The games that have publishers clicking their heels on the way to the piggy bank

#	GAME NAME	DEVELOPER	VERDICT
1 (1)	HALO Bungie Microsoft	9/10	BUY!
2 (4) ↑	PROJECT GOTHAM RACING Bizarre Creations Microsoft	9/10	BUY!
3 (2) ↓	2002 FIFA WORLD CUP Electronic Arts Electronic Arts	6/10	RENT
4 (New entry) →	MOTO GP URT Climax THQ	8/10	BUY!
5 (New entry) →	ISS2 KCEO Konami	7/10	BUY!
6 (1) ↓	DEAD OR ALIVE 3 Tecmo Microsoft	9/10	BUY!
7 (1) ↓	MAX PAYNE Remedy Take 2	9/10	BUY!
8 (3) ↓	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 01/02 Sports Interactive Eidos	9/10	BUY!
8 (Re-entry) →	STAR WARS: OBI-WAN LucasArts LucasArts	5/10	DIE
10 (8) ↓	RALLISPORT CHALLENGE Digital Illusions Microsoft	8/10	BUY!

KEY: → Slam Dunkin' ↑ Moving Up ↓ Sliding Down — Non-Mover

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GAME
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SALES OF THE UNEXPECTED

If you take away the licences and sequels, here's the top five original games

- 1 **HALO**
Bungie
Microsoft
- 2 **MOTO GP URT**
Climax
THQ
- 3 **MAX PAYNE**
Remedy
Take 2
- 4 **RALLISPORT CHALLENGE**
Digital Illusions
Microsoft
- 5 **WRECKLESS**
Bunkasha
Activision

LucasArts revive motorbike classic *Full Throttle* ▶ Soccer *Slam* announced

trace trim

TOTAL IMMERSION RACING

Eight-litre prototype engines? It's amazing they make it off the grid. Road rage? Here, it's a positive asset.



Razorworks, creators of *Enemy Engine*, an online PC chopper-simulation, recently announced its first

Xbox title: *Total Immersion Racing*.

The purpose of the game will be to work your way up the grid to reach top slot and drive the biggest, fastest, swiftest cars in the world, including (that's right) an eight litre prototype.

Razorworks claims that the key feature will be its driver AI. It reckons that if you nudge a fellow road hog off the road, he'll bear a grudge against you, perhaps storing up his anger until you're in a vulnerable position-taking a crucial corner, for instance-before



Team racing would appear to be part of the deal. Just watch you nudge off the track...

inflicting his own form of road justice. Imagine the agony of being dumped on the fira corner or the joy of avoiding the prang! Lovely.

The usual array of 'real world' tracks, such as Hockenheimring and Monza, is on the cards, as are 18 different GT cars. We're hoping this will be the most aggressive racer yet... We'll let you know when we see it in action. Until then, savour the screenshots. **X**

- Who Empire
- When Christmas



See them fly. Smart real-time lighting effects on the bodywork, too.

briefs

PlayStation 2's Xbox 360 next year. The PlayStation 2's Xbox 360 next year. The PlayStation 2's Xbox 360 next year.

PlayStation 2's Xbox 360 next year. The PlayStation 2's Xbox 360 next year. The PlayStation 2's Xbox 360 next year.

trace crime plays

TRUE CRIME

The GTA3 killer? Only time will tell...



Four years. That's how long it'll take GTA3 to reach Xbox.

But if you fancy scraping the underbelly of the underworld, and don't relish the prospect of rubbing shoulders with latter-day Krays, then *True Crime: Streets of LA*'s your bag, baby.

As hard-boiled copper Kang, you'll cruise the streets of LA on a personal mission against the city's crime-bosses and their multitudinous minions. The action takes place in various modes, there are driving sequences, and on-foot, third-person sections where your skill with fist, foot and 45mm handguns comes into play.

Taking Honk Kong cop moves as its inspiration, (think John Woo and Jackie Chan), *True Crime* promises a truly cinematic feel. The in-game cityscape stretches for 400 square miles, and features countless mechanics, gun-vendors and delis, where Kang can source information, track informants or simply pass the time being a bad-ass cop.

The sheer size of the city will be reflected in the challenges you face: around 20 main

missions and over 100 optional sub quests. Various events in the game, such as busting a perp or just cruising down the street with the police-band radio on, can trigger new missions, so in true GTA3 style, expect a fairly free-form experience. Chow Yun Fat, eat your heart out. **X**

- Who Jurellux
- When mid 2003



Sack it down, goomba. *True Crime* features a well-developed combat mode, as well as shooting and driving sequences.

status
genius
True Crime Streets of LA features plenty of brutal killings as well as a car stunt. This thing is going to get damn messy...

XGAMER launch control



the future's bright. the future's green. and black.



ON SALE ▶ SEPT 02
REVIEWED ▶ XGAMER 08

CRAZY TAXI 3

Let's face it, *Simpsons Road Rage* gave *Crazy Taxi* a bad name. But now the original bonkers taxi sim is returning to thrill us again with its own peculiar brand of street racing odyssey. The idea's simple—pick up customers, get 'em to their destinations ASAP, and reap the financial rewards. Ludicrously fast thrills from the folks that brought us *Gun Valkyrie*.



ON SALE ▶ SEPTEMBER
REVIEWED ▶ NEXT ISSUE

COMMANDOS 2

It may be tough and uncompromising, but Pyro Studios' wartime stealth-em-up is shaping up well. With a small squad of heroes at your disposal, it's your task to undermine Nazi forces and disrupt their naughtiness in a range of exotic WW2 theatres. The game's not quite finished yet, so we've decided to delay our review, no matter what you read elsewhere.

XGAMER MOST WANTED

Funny, summer's normally a quiet time for games, but the box o' joy seems to be bucking that trend this year. There are some pretty lurkers in the pipeline which look set to put the recent crop of mingers to shame

- 1 **MGS: SUBSTANCE**
Konami
Stealth-em-up
- 2 **CONFLICT: DESERT STORM**
SCI
Squad-based war sim
- 3 **PROJECT EGO**
Big Blue Box
RPG
- 4 **COMMANDOS 2**
Pyro/Eidos
Strategy
- 5 **GHOST RECON**
Red Storm/Ubisoft
Squad-level soldier sim

COMING SOON

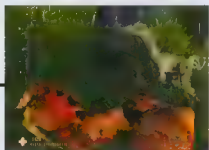
	PUBLISHER	GENRE	ON SALE	Will it blow my mind?	Sparks it?
Hunter: The Reckoning	Virgin	Hack-n-slasher	July 05		
Antz Extreme Racing	Empire	Racing	July 05		
Prisoner Of War	Codemasters	Action-strategy	July 05		
Red Card	Midway	The beautiful game	July 05		
Slam Tennis	Infogrames	Anyone for tennis?	July 12		
Buffy The Vampire Slayer	EA	Action-adventure	July 26		
Enclave	Swing	Action-adventure	Aug 02		
Fila World Tour Tennis	THQ	More tennis?	Aug 02		
Splashdown	Infogrames	Jetski	Aug 02		
Taz Wanted	Infogrames	Platform	Aug 23		
Grand Prix 4	Infogrames	Racing	Aug 23		
Aggressive Inline Skating	Acclaim	Rollerblade	Aug 23		
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	Activision	BMX trickster	Aug 30		
Morrowind	Ubisoft	RPG	Aug 30		
Bruce Lee	Vivendi	Beat'em-up	Sept 02		
Crazy Taxi 3	Sega	Driving	Sept 02		
Yager	THQ	Flight combat	Sept 02		
Conflict Desert Storm	SCI	Squad-based action	Sept 06		
Gauntlet Dark Legacy	Midway	Action-slasher	Sept 06		
Turok Evolution	Acclaim	First-person shooter	Sept 06		
WWE Raw	THQ	Lardy slapper	Sept 06		
Street Hoops	Activision	Basketball	Sept 13		
Lotus Challenge	Virgin	Racing	Sept 13		
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	Virgin	RPG	Sept 20		
Colin McRae Rally 3	Codemasters	Racing	Sept 27		
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfing	Activision	Surfing	Sept 27		
Largo Winch	Ubisoft	Action-adventure	Sept 27		
Barbarian	Virgin	Action-adventure	Sept 02		
Battle Engine Aquila	Infogrames	All-out war	Sept 02		
Brute Force	Microsoft	Squad-based shooter	Sept 02		
Chase	BAM	Driving	Sept 02		
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin	Eidos	Stealth-shooter	Sept 02		
Jane's Attack Squadron	Xicat	Flight sim	Sept 02		
Commandos 2	Lulofs	Action-strategy	September		



ON SALE ▶ JULY 05
REVIEWED ▶ PAGE 62

PRISONER OF WAR

"Ginger's biffed his kipper down at D-block. Run like spink, and keep shmtum, or the Bratweurst boys'll be onto us. What!" It's Brits behind bars in wartime Germany, and guess who's job it is to help them outfox the guards and escape? With *POW's* blend of puzzles, action and stealth, it's turned out quite nice again.



ON SALE ▶ SEPT 06
REVIEWED ▶ XGAMER 08

TUROK EVOLUTION

Turok or not Turok? That's the question, although there's little doubt in our minds that the arch raptor-roaster's latest first-person outing will, indeed, rock. Exceedingly heavy weapons abound, but you'll need brains to get ahead, as an out-and-out commando approach will be the fastest route to becoming din-din-din.

➔ READER'S MOST WANTED

Which upcoming games are you most looking forward to? Register your vote for the chance to scoop a top prize.

Name _____ Address _____

Postcode _____ Email _____

XBOX GAMES WISH LIST...

List your five most wanted Xbox games, then send them to the address below.

- 1 _____ 2 _____
- 3 _____ 4 _____
- 5 _____

If I win the Most Wanted prize, please send me the following free game _____

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My Most Wanted, XGamer Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW Or email xgamer@futurenet.co.uk

READERS' MOST WANTED

The future's bright. *Project Ego* is dominating your wish-lists, *Halo 2* fever is rising, and *Commandos* is yomping steadily up the charts as the month's sail by. This month's winner of the game is David Melhuish from Coventry

- 1 **PROJECT EGO**
Big Blue Box
RPG
- 2 **COMMANDOS 2**
Pyro/Eidos
Strategy
- 3 **COLIN MCRACE RALLY 3**
Codemasters
Rallying
- 4 **GRAND PRIX 4**
Microprose/Infogrames
F1 racing
- 5 **HALO 2**
Bungie/Microsoft
First-person shooter

WORLD WAR II

PRISONER OF WAR™

WIN THE WAR FROM WITHIN



SHOT DOWN BEHIND ENEMY LINES AND IMPRISONED, YOU THOUGHT YOUR MISSION WAS OVER, BUT YOUR BATTLE IS REALLY JUST BEGINNING.

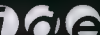
As you study the camp's routine, you quickly realise that there's more to this than simply your own survival. In this intense 3rd-person action adventure, you must think your way out of trouble, using your cunning, wits and skill to scheme through your missions and figure out a strategy to defeat the Axis masterplan...



PC



PlayStation 2



gameboy advance

www.codemasters.com

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GENIUS AT PLAY™

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SPLINTER CELL



DEUS EX 2



BLINX



STEEL BATTALION



GAMES ON THE EDGE



How Xbox is pushing the envelope with innovation and pure gaming brilliance.



Thank the Lord. Nerds have saved the world! Just when you thought those whitecoat-wearing geeks were wasting their time chipping away at complex mathematical equations in dingy labs, they've done it. After years of laser-targeting experiments, they now realise the world has acquired enough weapons to destroy the sun. Starved of research material, the brainboxes have finally turned their attention to a far more pressing need in society. Their new brief is to create face-drainingly brilliant videogames—or, more specifically, Xbox games. Yes.

Building on seemingly dull foundations like physics and maths, developers are now devising games so impressive you'll soon be a quivering gaming wreck. But it's not just the techno brains that are pushing Xbox to a new level of brilliance. Creative

types, too, are leaping from their bath-tubs everywhere, yelling "Eureka!" and proclaiming their latest genius idea to revolutionise the gaming experience. In the world of gaming, science and art are unlikely, but very nicely snuggled, bedfellows.

However, it's not this unholy marriage of boffins and floundering creatives that we are joined here today to celebrate, but their cutesy offspring, the future of gaming—the games themselves. Flick through the following 12 pages to see how *Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance* will rock your world, *Deus Ex 2* will get inside your head and *Splinter Cell* will have you papping your pants. If that ain't enough, you'll be positively beaming when you read about *Blinx*'s amazing time-distortion ideas and then quaking behind the sofa as buildings fall in *Steel Battalion*.

Impressive, for sure, but us gamers want to know what the Xbox games of the future will actually *play* like. So read on—and lap it up...





METAL GEAR SOLID 2 SUBSTANCE

James Bond's too soft. Max Payne's too thick. Master Chief's too friendly. Enter, tough-ass, double-dealing loner Solid Snake. Now *there's* a hero...



At last, Solid Snake is tip-toeing his way onto the world's greatest console, drenched in the appreciative drool of a million PS2 and PC gamers. *Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance* casts you as kick-

ass spy-types in a game that rewards cunning and deadly stealth over accuracy with a handgun, rocket launcher or gas grenade—although there'll be plenty of opportunities to spill crimson, too.

Sulk past guards using the game's third-person perspective, then slip into first-person mode to hold up baddies and nab their goods, before dragging their bodies out of sight and jamming them in a locker. Give yourself away with soggy footprints and you'll be cursing your carelessness. Take out a CCTV camera with an EMP grenade and you'll be rubbing your hands with glee, waiting for the next fool to stumble fatally into your sights. Get the picture?

Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty, the heart of the *Substance* package, is neatly designed to the finest detail and rammed with such moments—moments that will leave you beaming with pure smugness as you creep past guards, roll from behind a wall to let loose a tranquilliser dart and savour *MSG2's* many brilliantly conceived plot twists.

MEATY PACKAGE

Substance is a new package designed to wow us Xbox types and hit back at criticism levelled at the plain old *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty*, which, despite marking a brilliant PS2 debut for undercover maestro Solid Snake, wasn't without its faults. The game was too short, for starters, and the intrusive storyline—battered with cut-scenes that end-to-end took over half an hour to watch—was a bit yawnsome.

Fortunately, *Substance* is a new, improved and vastly extended addition to the Snake series. As well as featuring the original *Sons Of Liberty*, it now offers a range of sub-games which better showcase the game's slick mechanics. New virtual reality (VR) missions and innovative game modes, such as *Snake Tales* and *Alternate Missions*, join a skateboarding section in fleshing out an old-ish-but-still-damned-good blockbuster to excellent effect.

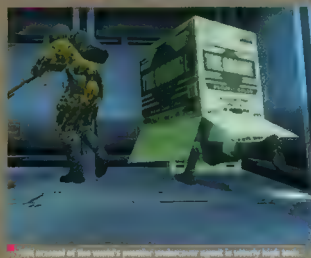
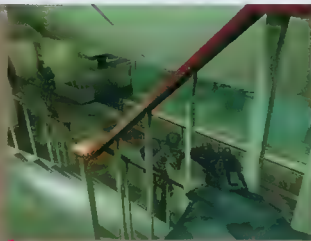
Coming on a double-sided DVD package, and with seven different characters to assume (Snake is joined by tuxedo Snake, *Metal Gear Solid* Snake, Raiden, Raiden as a ninja, Raiden in other costumes, plus other secret agents), *MSG2: Substance* promises gameplay to sink your choppers into

SONS OF LIBERTY

Unlike thousands of big-budget, high-profile rivals, *Metal Gear Solid 2* is a magnificent game that actually lives up to the hype. As Solid Snake, then rookie Raiden, it's your task to sneak around hostile enemy locations, solving missions and puzzles. Alert guards and you have to lug it until the alarm fades—or you're cornered by not shield-busting baddies hammering lead into your skull. Although your arsenal improves with time, the pick of your assets is the brilliant tranquilliser gun, which arrow-darts into enemies. Shook guards in the head with a dart to take 'em out quickly or, if you're really being smart, pop one in their ankle so they follow round the corner before the poison sets in (and they collapse in a heap out of sight of onlooking comrades).

In the first *Metal Gear Solid*, Snake came out on retirement to take on the mysterious head of a terrorist organisation which had taken over a nuclear weapons disposal facility in Alaska. It soon emerged that this base was a cover for the US military's plans to create *Metal Gear Rax*, a giant fighting mech. Espionage and counter-truths made for a compelling adventure.

In the plot of *Sons Of Liberty* follows Snake's search for those marauding mechs and opens on a sea vessel in New York. As torrential rain showers the ship, which lists and rolls with the tide, you need to take out a team of top-class Russian special troops using your supreme stealth and mean armoury. Soon you'll switch character as you head for the big shell level, adopting the persona of new boy Raiden, who is battling against time to stop military machinations escalating out of control.



Snake's second of the world's greatest undercover agent to silently high-tail it.

SNAKE TALES AND ALTERNATE MISSIONS



METAL GEAR SOLID 2 SUBSTANCE

VR MISSIONS



SKATEBOARDING

MSG Creator Hideo Kojima is famous for sticking off-the-wall ideas in his games, even if they don't quite make sense. And he's called himself in Substance—by adding a skateboarding mode.

Yes, you heard us right... Using Konami's *Evolution Skateboarding* engine, you can now guide Snake around the Big Shell oil rig level from *Sons Of Liberty*, grinding, flipping and spinning like a pro.

Cynics who remember the unit-shifting *Sons Of Liberty* demo which accompanied *Zone Of The Enders* could suspect another advertising stunt for Konami's extreme blast, but this remains the most unreal twist in the *Metal Gear* story to date.



There's hoping these babies aren't fiction—hardcore, hardcore. Snake will really get some air.

WHO IS KOJIMA?



METAL GEAR SOLID (PS2, XBOX)

SONY'S THE FIFTH ELEMENT (PS2, XBOX)

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: MOTHERS SUBSTANCE (PS2, XBOX)

SNAKE BOARDING



"Perhaps a better incarnation of Sony's classic first-person shooter and jumping in 3D massive free-roaming 3D action adventure? Stranger things have happened."



cover exclusive

ARE YOU WATCHING, HALO?

A familiar voice slices through the black screen at Konami's giant E3 stand. Everyone shuffles and quickly forgets the background kerfuffle of rambling gamers and blaring address systems. Solid Snake's gravelly tones announce the imminent arrival of *Metal Gear* on Xbox. "Changing sides?" he asks, adding, "I don't recall saying I was on yours." Hear that, Sony? Snake is working for us now, even if he is sleeping with the enemy.



The short montage of video footage unfolds before an agog audience, hunched on a carpet like worshippers at a shrine. Little clues to the make-up of *Substance* flash up on screen. Words echo the themes of *Sons Of Liberty* and the extra game modes: "Deception... cover up... it's all a game..." Key notes in the latest twist in Snake's saga. Our hero is out of retirement and seemingly suffering from flashbacks, revisiting his past to learn the truth about power struggles that affect all of humanity. Here's how the stunning video shapes up...



METAL GEAR SOLID 2

SUBSTANCE



1 After some atmospheric preamble, the familiar opening of *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty* flickers onto the screen...



2 The screen flashes with mysterious cameos of the Xbox game—here a guard is taken down by Snake. Interesting...



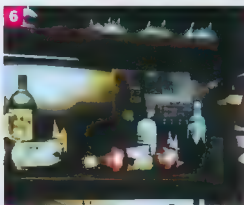
3 Whoop! Just in case you've forgotten everything, this is the new *Substance* game. Get it? *Metal Gear SUBSTANCE!*



4 The mulleted one sports a snazzy tuxedo as he exits a bog. Shades of *Syphon Filter* on the PlayStation, anyone?



5 The Tanker's bar is decimated by the smart Snake. Ooh, look how all the bottles smash and liquid oozes. Class...



6 Hang on a second—he wasn't just showing off. There's actually some sort of console there. What's he spraying?



7 Damn. No time to find out—we're suddenly outside and leading a little girl to safety. Snake sports his usual gear...



8 Flying robots attack and the girl quivers behind a crate. Wait, she looks familiar... What the hell is going on here?



9 Snake does the manly thing and disposes of his assailants with a few controlled bursts of gunfire...



10 Now another mysterious turn. In the *Sons of Liberty* game you'll encounter countless plot twists and odd men...



11 Another blast of VR mission footage shows what look like Snake's gloved mitts expertly handling a pistol...



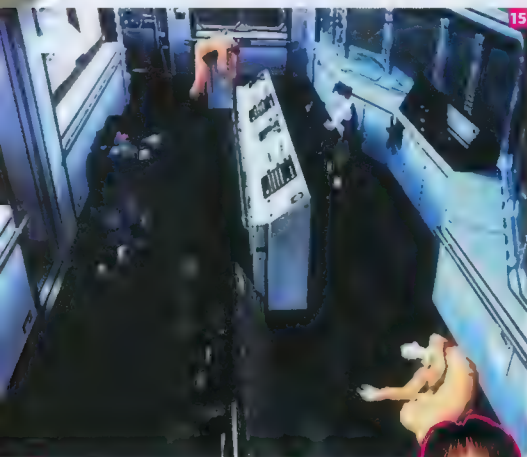
12 Another VR mission requires a full frontal assault on some boxes. See how they become more solid with each hit...



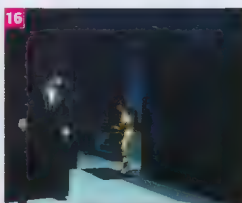
13 Until a mighty explosion from a rocket-launcher destroys the lot and shrouds Snake in sparks and smoke...



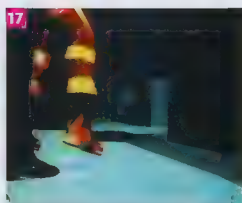
14 Then another virtual reality section flashes on-screen, with Snake executing four cat-shaded guards with his M16. Die!



A blast from the past as Snake bumps into another old friend from earlier Metal Gear...



Sneak skulks behind a pillar as he approaches a cat-shaded guard in the VR missions. Can't... make... a... sound...



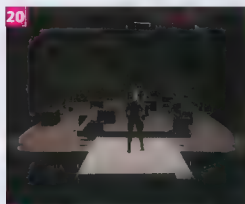
Without so much as a peep, Snake sweeps him up in his loving arms and throttles him with a jerk of his arm.



Then another fantastically inventive twist on the VR missions flickers into view—guards as giants!



Oh my God! And they're coming for Solid Snake, hunting him down like 300-ton behemoths. Time to leg it...



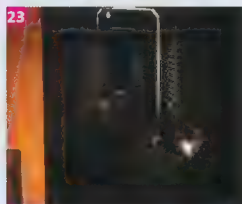
Now Raiden stands stock still as a virtual reality environment slowly comes into existence around him. Cool...



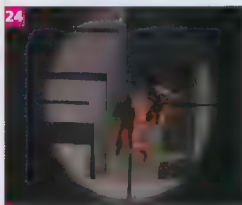
Now it's time to cut to more action from the Alternate Missions as Snake takes on a string of bad men with guns.



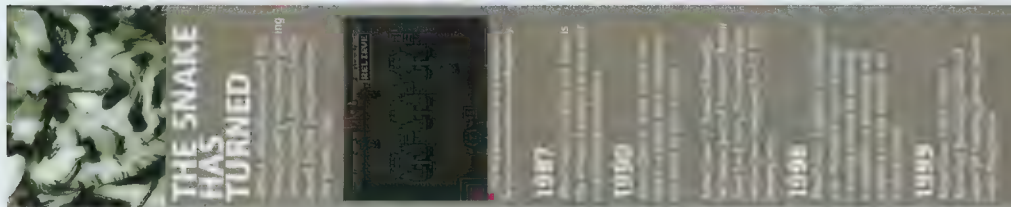
A quick flick of the camera and we're watching Snake from on high as he blasts through the enemy without flinching.



The pace between cuts quickens as Raiden deflects a volley of bullets before nailing his assailant...



Then Raiden takes potshots at virtual opponents in a training mission, landing single-bullet kills every time.



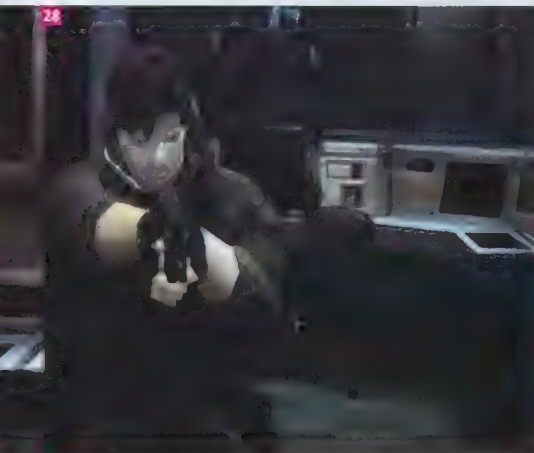
METAL GEAR SOLID 2 SUBSTANCE



25 Another VR mission recalls earlier footage and shows Snake lining up a shot on an unsuspecting guard. Shame...



26 Then our hero performs that famous hold-up manoeuvre on another guard he's caught unawares...



28 But Snake remains calm as the whole 'body' evaporates before him. It seems someone is mucking with his mulleted head...



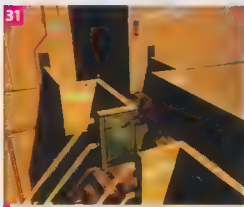
27 What? He's disappearing from the ground up. It seems the guard was a decoy. It's a trap! Panic! Somebody help us!



29 Back to Snake taking on those hordes. He's taking the mickey now with his one-handed firing manoeuvre...



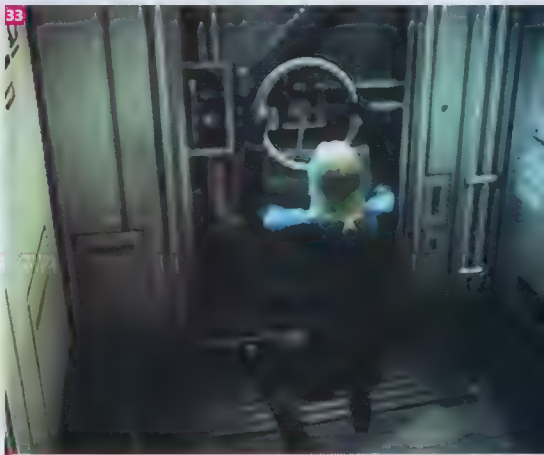
30 Ooh, hello. Time to mail a couple more snivelling special forces types. What happened to stealth action, then?



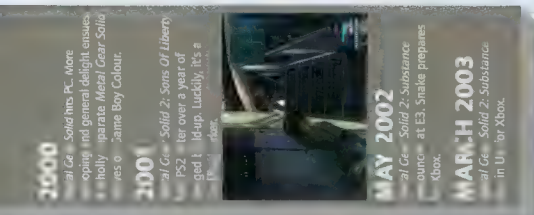
31 And as for that damn whining child down there... "You can have it in the face, too, you miserable blighter!"



32 It's nearly over. People are fidgeting. Then a treat—is that Raiden in the ninja garb knocking metal posts?



33 We end with a typical Kojima joke as selfish Raiden pulls off a valve, turns to see if he's been seen, then replaces it. The end.



DEUS EX2

Divine first-person action
set to explode onto Xbox.
More *Ex* please... etc.

The first *Deus Ex*, released on PC in 2000, was just brilliant. A first-person, near-future adventure of epic proportion, it featured a masterly, twisting storyline and open gameplay

that made it one of the finest games ever made. And yet, in some respects, it let us punters down. Well, a bit, at least

Average graphics and iffy physics—strangely gliding chairs and badly lip-synched cut-scenes, for instance—meant the world of *Deus Ex* never quite felt as real as it should have. But, did such problems spoil the game? Hell no. Can they be reversed? You bet your bottom Euro they can.

GHOSTLY SPECTOR

While *Deus Ex 2: Invisible War* should easily see off problems of old, the brains behind the project, Warren Spector, wants to push things further by enabling the player to overcome challenges in his own way. Approach a door and there's always a dozen ways to bypass it. Blow it up, find the key, pick the lock, find an air vent... It's up to you and down to the modifications you apply to your genetically spliced character, Alex Denton (the male or female sibling of JC and Paul Denton, by the way).

Currently the game is little more than a technical demo, showcasing amazing physics and impressive lighting and sound effects. The sound system is particularly clever and will have you terrified of waking slumbering guards. With Dolby 5.1 on Xbox, you'll also hear the directions guards are speaking from, so you

❑ Publisher Eidos
❑ Developer Ion Storm
❑ Due Late 2003

GENIUS

Use genetic modifications to affect the way you play. Improve your strength, or your aim, or your intelligence. Improve your understanding of the game. Improve your understanding of the game.

Watch in awe as the explosion bends nearby scenery into submission. Shame you missed that robot right in front of you though—considering he was the target.

WANNA GET PHYSICAL?

The world of physics is broadly dull, but when development maestros get their hands on some decent sums, things truly hot up. The incredible physics of *Deus Ex 2* not only makes the world seem more realistic, but enables you to manipulate elements of scenery, which in turn helps you advance through the game. Forget technology for technology's sake—standing that couch on its end might just let you reach that air vent.

EACH BEAUTIFUL SURFACE IS LACED WITH LAYER UPON LAYER OF TEXTURE, WHICH GIVES EVERYTHING A TOTALLY SOLID FEEL

can hotfoot it over there and bury them, carefully shutting the door so their comrades don't hear the blood splashing on the tiles

Each beautiful surface in the game is laced with layer upon layer of textures, which give everything a totally solid feel—a fact reflected in the faces of the characters, which are now, for added realism, built from full bone structures. Scenery objects also react realistically when you bump into them

As for the plot, there are few clues yet. We can reveal that the game is set 15 years after the events outlined in *Deus Ex* and that genetically modified agents from a secret government organisation are hot on your trail. The original's conspiracy plots have also been toned down slightly as you travel across the globe, kicking ass in Seattle, Cairo and Germany. One to watch. And eventually play. **X**



That shoulder helps you find the location of your next target. (You know, too late.)



The old comic, you fact: Let off, and while the glowing guard?

Just look across in your jumpsuit, pop a cap in their eyes.



When you're looking at the scene, see it, when's just a glowing machine?



At E3, the annual explosion of games in Los Angeles, there are few surprises. If it ain't a sequel or it hasn't got a licence, the chances are it hasn't been shouted about in the months leading up to the show and it's dead in the water, according to the rules of games publishers. We first saw *Splinter Cell* in *XGamer 04* when we spotted early code over in Canada—and it immediately impressed. Since then, Ubi Soft has added a licence and begun shouting about its new baby, suggesting renewed faith in its latest title. We tried the updated version at E3—and it's superb.

Tom Clancy's *Splinter Cell* is a third-person stealth adventure that treads on Solid Snake's toes—it's tactical espionage action of the highest order, at least if the stunning demo level we got to grips with is anything to go by. In one section, we found ourselves on a ledge opposite an enemy building. Flicking on our night-vision goggles, we spotted movement in the

□ Publisher Ubi Soft
□ Developer Ubi Soft
□ Due December

GENIUS

Splinter Cell's sneaky physics engine enables you to locomote some wacky ways around. Sneak in Fish Card? No worries. For instance: Right under the nose of the enemy, who doesn't see you?

Our hero tiptoes past a suspicious-looking suit. The second Sam's spotted you can break into a canter, then leg it.

TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL

Sam Fisher sneaks up on Solid Snake and looks good to take the mother down...

window of another apartment block. A silenced shot to the neck saw to that guy before we slid down a zipline onto a wooden porch opposite. As we landed, our footsteps alerted someone inside, who poked his head out the window, only for us to silence him with a hand gun before edging around the wall into the building.

ANGELES DELIGHT

Using the *Unreal* engine and spectacular shadow and lighting effects, the game lets you skulk around slicing necks, hurting people and causing havoc without causing a sound. A gauge indicates how well hidden you are, enabling you to push against a wall and surprise-snap a guard's neck as he meanders past. Thermal and night-vision views give the game an eerie, ultra-modern feel, too, while gas grenades and the usual arsenal of weapons ensure you never get caught short if your cover is blown. And other subtle touches, such as the dull-sounding 'soft body' physics system make objects, such as plastic doors and ropes, move with astonishing realism.

As Sam Fisher, you can even hang from ledges, shimmy up drainpipes and clamber up fences to reach a nice angle so you can whip out your zip-lining tool. But the best touch so far is the use of a fibre-optic camera, which is mounted on the end of a wire and enables you to sneak behind a door and gawp into room by sliding the device through, say, a keyhole.

Think *Metal Gear Solid* meets *Syphon Filter* meets the *James Bond* movies and read our tips: THIS... LOOKS. AMAZING. **XX**

SIX STEPS TO HEAVEN

Sources to speed up with adrenaline when he charges enemies. Class.



Shadows aren't just for show. They move in real time and provide vital cover while you sneak about.



How cool is that? The accurately grainy texture let your night-vision add another layer of tension.



Sam is lethal with an assault rifle, but his primary tools are his little feet. Run Fisher. Run.

BLINX: THE TIME SWEEPER

He sweeps time. That's what he does. And tick follows tock follows tick follows tock...

Publisher Microsoft
 Developer Artoon
 Due November



Using his powerful TS-1000 vacuum cleaner, cat-thing Blinx sweeps time for a living. Don't ask us why. He just does. By sucking up crystals he powers his Time Sweeper, a device

which enables him to monkey around with the space-time continuum. Sounds interesting...

Blinx is essentially a platform game in which you jump from ledge to ledge through 40 colourful levels on the planet B1964. Your mission is to rescue a princess from a bunch of cackling time bandits—but that's not the important bit. It's the time-manipulation stuff that's really impressive. Each colour of crystal you collect corresponds to a different time function, enabling him to pause, record, rewind, fast-forward and slow down time. It's nothing less than a revolution in gameplay.

In one section, we came across a meaty badgie protecting some pick-ups. He was too tough for

GENIUS

Head to jump a big wall. Stand on a ledge and get your 'past' Blinx to release you. The other end. Your 'present' half will then be catapulted over. Such time-sucking is the way to success in this.



Blinx takes on a couple of not-so-scary-looking green blobs with his Dyson-bearing TS-1000. With a creative tool, just think of the possibilities.

SAWN-OFF SHOTGUN

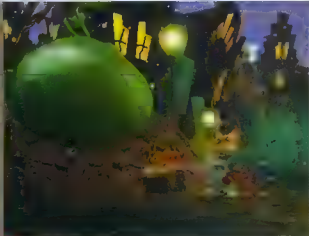
you to suck up and store bits of scenery so you can fire them out at naughty enemies en route. As you progress, you can also upgrade your sucker, and thus store up and fire even larger pieces of the background—this could be the first game that lets you crush an irritating boss with a house.

little Blinx to take down, so we ran at the fella and led him away from the goodies, chucking in a few jabs for good measure, all the while recording the action. That enabled us to rewind and replay our earlier effort so a shadowy 'past' Blinx could bag the nasty bloke while our present incarnation nabbed the goodies and legged it. Paradoxical or what?

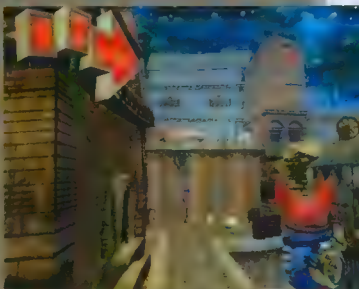
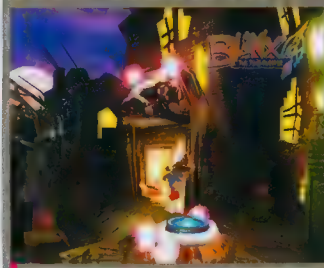
Later, we fell down a sheer cliff when a bridge collapsed, leaving us stuck. Luckily, we had enough crystals to rewind to a point before the darned thing fell down and cross before it ever collapsed.

CRYSTAL TIPS

Collect four coloured crystals to activate your time manoeuvres—if you get three of the same colour you can activate the corresponding time tick once. Collect four and you can pull it off twice. If you don't have three that match, you lose the crystals and your chance to change time until you nab four more. So you have to explore every nook and cranny, climbing vines and walls and grabbing ceilings to find the right crystals, taking into account the puzzles you're trying to solve on that level at the same time. We had a lot of fun with *Blinx* and it's apparently only possible on Xbox because the game 'remembers' your previous positions from the hard disk. **X**



A security badgie cowers and ditches under the immediate suction power of Blinx's mighty TS-1000 vacuum cleaner. Go, Blinx, go!





Many words have been spent describing the nutty controller that powers *Steel Battalion*, but few people have stopped to drool over the important stuff—the

stunning graphics and brilliant gameplay.

While sitting at the controller, wrenching your mech from a first-person view, it's easy to enthuse about quirks such as the start up process—flicking five switches to boot the thing up is surprisingly satisfying. In fact, the control system is quickly mastered and brilliantly responsive, not to mention realistic. Obviously, when a controller features a windscreen wiper to clear the built up dust on your viewer, you know you've got something uniquely brilliant in your mitts.

The most interesting thing about *Steel Battalion*, though, is how the dust got there in the first place. Suffled up by massive explosions as rockets and heavy machine gun fire fall about

- Publisher Capcom
- Developer Capcom
- Due October

GENIUS

Get blasted onto your knees by your enemy and you'll still see your mech. You see the realistic weathering on your mechs, the plasma torches and chain gun.

A hilariously moped gamer grips his sticks in awe as his mech collapses to the floor. No-one told him about the eject button...

STEEL BATTALION

And now, mech-ing its way into the ring, weighing in at an incredible 19,000 pounds...

your mech, the grime in your face is all that remains of your enemies, felled by your own weaponry.

The game comes into its own when you realise, with a quick glance at the radar, that you're being outflanked by an unseen assailant. A salvo of rockets later and the six storey building in front of you is reduced to rubble, then it's time to open up with your secondary guns to finish off your opponent, who is caught totally off-guard by your audacious blasting.

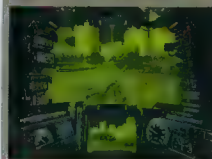
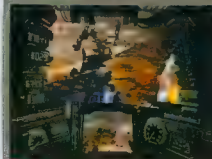
LOSING CONTROL The graphics are high on photorealistic and the baddies relentless, so you'll never run out of fodder for your cannons. As you plod through mangled city streets, you'll be able to take on scarily small ground troops (am I up that high?) and all manner of metal foes in 20 different machines which reshape the landscape in 25 missions.

It's now emerging that there will be an online sequel to the game known as *Tekki* in the Far East, but it's not clear whether that feature will be including in the series debut in the UK. If ever a game was built for online chatter and blather, it's this. Imagine taking on an arena full of human-controlled mechs. With an armoury that includes plasma torches, 270mm rifles and twin pod rocket launchers, you could probably take on most Soviet states single-handedly.

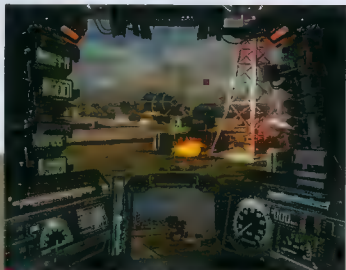
The only worry is that the game won't be quite the same without the controller—and, while there's no word on how much UK gamers will have to shell out, the game/controller combo costs ¥19,800 in Japan (about £110/€170). Innovation doesn't come cheap. **X**

BO-EJECT!

The original design it was to be glass-covered and



Steel Battalion screenshot and quote to publisher: Steel Battalion screenshot and quote to publisher: Steel Battalion screenshot and quote to publisher.



That pretty red and white screen is just crying out to be smashed into oblivion.



Remember those cheap flaming paycops when you're cockpit shivers with realistic terror?



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hands on

XGAMER we've played into the future



select

- 42 PROJECT EGO**
We trekked down to Big Blue Box to play-test the most ambitious project since the pyramids
- 44 HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN**
Fancy spending your evenings crouched in the shadows waiting to kill people?
- 46 BC**
How life was before Christ turned up and told us shagging and prints are evil
- 48 TIMESPLITTERS 2**
First-person-shooter from the GoldenEye mob. You'll split time, then shoot a load of people. Surely that's just asking for a paradox?
- 50 JURASSIC PARK PROJECT GENESIS**
Ever fancied running your own Jurassic Park? No? Then I don't know why we bother
- 51 ANTZ EXTREME RACING**
Take Mario Kart and make it nowhere near as good. Oh, and chuck a few ants in for good measure
- 51 DAVE MIRRA BMX XXX**
Mirra's returning for another tragic attempt at taking Tony Hawk's crown, only this time, his game will feature adult material. Why not just have a quick surf instead?

HOW GAMES MAGS WORK...



ALPHA CODE

The earliest game code publishers will show. Major features missing; provides a sketchy indication of gameplay.



BETA CODE

First real sight of full game. Still undergoing bug-testing, but the majority of missions and graphics are complete.



PRE-SUBMISSION

Virtually finished, code is ready for submission to Microsoft quality control with a view to confirming production.

first contact

The first look at an exciting title, that our superior games antennae have detected at a very early stage in the development process.

hands on

This is when we expect to play the game for the first time and report our initial findings to you. A good early indication of how it's shaping up.

reviews

The acid test. The final code is now ready for us to rip apart, leaving no stone unturned during our merciless testing. We do it for you.

HANDS ON PREDICTIONS

Up/Downs We're not going to one around and write vague, informed previews that cause false hopes about a game's potential. We'll rank its good and bad points right here.

Forecast A rough guide to the prospects of the game based on its early form. Bear in mind this is not a final judgement. A lot can change between preview stage and review.

XGAMER PREDICTS

- **PAL Convolution** Prepare to be appalled by borders unless Capcom breaks this lot or goes PAL conversion.
- **Resident experts** Aren't we all? It's all of this, is now?
- **Zombies** It's hard to go wrong with our favourite challenging chums.
- **Action** No auto lock on, rare, yes, need to be good at games.
- **Medieval Japan** Because, 600 years and counting, keep us still cool.
- **Capcom** It's made by one of our favourite Japanese developers.
- **Onimusha** wouldn't look revolutionary if you stuck a breast and a cigar on it, but you can't beat a good solid adventure.

- **GREEN IS GO!**
This game's looking good. You can start getting excited... NOW.
- **CAUTION**
Hmmm. This one could go either way. Don't rush in.
- **RED ALERT**
Ouch. An unfolding tragedy—unlikely they'll save it in time.

DO NOT MISS...
STAYING ALIVE Complete 33% Ticky guide, we broke a leg so you don't have to.

MANIFEST LOAN The tall grass of deep fields can hide many enemies, especially werewolves. Other than slicing through it with your sword, you must be more than a just of shredded wheat.

project
ego



And here it is. Look beyond the morphing effects or character development, and *Project Ego* could be called an action RPG. You'll explore a luscious fantasy world, cleaving monsters in twain as you pursue your adventure or solve myriad subquests. But the similarity to any RPG you've played before ends right there, because they've completely rethought the genre from the ground up

A keystone of *Ego's* innovation is that the merchants and townsfolk you meet are simulations not scripts. Every NPC is an individual AI, with different responses and interests, and they happily go about their daily lives in *Ego's* real-time world until you decide to

game

Genre Action RPG

Players 1

Movies www.bigbox.com/game/game.html
Code stage Alpha

company

Developer Blog & Box

Publisher Lionhead

Contact
01483 796 700
www.ionhead.com

Bored of the Rings? Then it's time for a long overdue kick up the RPG.

release early 2003 complete

IT'S THE LORE

The Grimm-fandangled atmosphere owes more than a little to traditional fairytale.



1 The dark, grimy, creepy feel of the world is scary and dangerous again, as they are in fables.



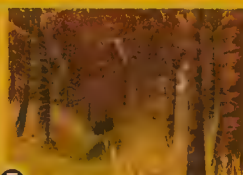
2 The influence of Grimm's fairy tales is obvious, or dark, perhaps?



3 Ah, a lovely old lady (in the woods). Probably where an evil old child-stealing witch would live.



4 Look close and that tapestry depicts a scene from another fantasy—Beowulf, perhaps?



5 Different types of vegetation are placed according to region, so that there's no abrupt change in terrain.



Your character starts as a blank slate, an Everyman, onto whom you can project your ego (ash, that working title is obvious now, yes?). You could play cool, dark and dangerous...

THE DEVELOPER SPEAKS! SELF DEFENCE

XGamer: "What's *Project Ego* determined to change about RPGs then?"

Dene Carter, of Big Blue Box: "Our first criticism of RPGs was the character, and how they never represent who you want to be."

"You end up playing people you wouldn't even say hello to in real life. Grow up, Cloud Strife, you annoying 17-year-old. And you never make a decision. Quick, you MUST go here/kill them/fall in love with her. This is supposed to be a roleplaying game."

ALTERED EGO

Being able to alter your haircut, your beard, your clothes and your skin art is great fun but it's more than cosmetic. A scary appearance can make others fearful or dismissive in your presence, and that's exactly how you'll look after a lifetime of evil deeds. As your character ages, the game even takes into account your overall stress levels when adding wrinkles and creases to your face.



Never pass out at a party where your so-called friends have access to felt tips, or you'll wake up looking like this.

interfere. Watch long enough and the shops close, the children skip from the schoolroom to play and the guards resume their evening patrols. Should you then defend their village from monsters, or unravel a local mystery, your heroic reputation will increase and you'll be treated with more respect. But make a blunder, or run from a fight, and you'll advance your reputation as an idiot or a coward.

You're never forced to pursue the righteous path, however, and an evil reputation can be just as useful when it comes to intimidating the peasants into surrendering what you want. The whole thrust of *Ego* is to invite you to roleplay—literally, this time—so that you make the decisions, instead of being herded along a pre-set route.

Le Creuset Crusader

Even the combat has a novel twist on the usual 3D hack-and-slash: as you become more proficient, you'll learn special moves to show off. A neat decapitation

will elicit cheers from onlookers, or it may be your skill with improvised weaponry that sticks with them.

As bold as it sounds, Big Blue Box is confident of delivering precisely what everyone said they couldn't. So dihedrals beware: *Project Ego* is going to shake you by the fur trim and yell in your pointy ears until you demand more RP from your RPG. **ZZ Zy Nicholson**

GAMER PREDICTS

- Liberty** Real freedom to explore and mould your character
- Yodel-ey-heh-heh** Ginormous 3D world of forests and mountains streams from the hard drive for a sense of continuous exploration
- Grimm** It's European fairytale-like, so finally, an arc-free zone?
- Forsooth!** So far, the code contains only a hint of how the story and dialogue will be delivered
- Eh?** Old school RPG fans may not get it. Maybe that's a plus, though

By trying something genuinely new and clever, *Ego* looks set to shame the more formula-bound *Morrowind*—and somehow looks even lovelier.

HIT

DON'T BE ALARMED

Hitman 2: Silent Assassin is a third-person action game.



1 With a sniper scope in the laundry closet, Alibi



2 Tap to the fire alarm's emergency alarm, Alibi

3 Jump in a snazzy fire suit and grab the key

4 Don't worry—your chopper's not far off



After you've popped a cap in the garden, the world, who was investigating of your victim in her spare time, appears. Time to off another innocent bystander.



hands on

hitman 2 silent assassin

You'll wade into blood so deep you must keep killing...

release september 14 complete



Spend a lifetime totting up accounts in a big red book, retire at 65, receive a carriage clock and relax in your garden till you die. Easy. But if you're the world's number one hitman it's a bit tougher to 'just retire'. Not even giving up your night vision scope and your dosh to brew mead with a priest in Italy will secure a quiet life. At least not if *Hitman 2: Silent Assassin* is anything to go by

stealthy diet

As a genetically modified hotpotch of the very best hitmen ever, you're forced out of retirement when your housemate, the priest, is kidnapped by a local mafia-type with a lardy waistline. Mission one: kill porky Don Gulliani

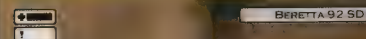
While you skulk around the Don's villa, and tons more levels, you'll learn that planning your move plays in a game that looks like your typical third-person

HIT THE SHOWER

Once you've decided to end some snooping busybody's interfering life you'll have to take care of the corpse if you want to avoid detection. Time to get creative...



This promising security guard wasn't going away. After hitting his target, you drag the carcass out of sight.



He's come around past into the bath room in a north checking him. Behind this shower curtain. Shouldn't mean the chances of discovery a hit.

Q&A

Q: What's the most difficult part of the game?

A: The most difficult part of the game is the most difficult part of the game.

Q: What's the most difficult part of the game?

A: The most difficult part of the game is the most difficult part of the game.

HI, I'M DOUG MCCLURE



1



2

3

4

EAT-A-BUS REX



"As Zog stared out across the timeless wonder of the prehistoric landscape, there was only one vital thought on his mind. 'Big.'"

Xbox ONLY!

No, we didn't believe it either. But then we saw it running, and those are genuine Xbox screens. Cripes.

hands on

bC



If you've ever been (a) a student and (b) drunk—yes, it's hard to imagine one without the other—then you must have had *that* conversation about travelling back through time. Would your modern

wisdom give you an edge, or would you fall victim to the brutality of ages past?

BC asks that question, as you control a doomed tribe of pathetic humans in a land of hungry predators. Being smarter, developing tools and working in numbers is your only hope of evolving our ancestors from dino's din-dins to dominant race.

"You're not going to believe me when I say this," says Lionhead's Peter Molyneux, "but this is an action adventure like *Mario*." Sure enough, we double-take. "It's not set in some primary-coloured world, though. It's unbelievably gory and savage. If you really went back to prehistoric times, there'd be moments when you were wading through blood."

It's trog eat trog out there, and that's if the raptors don't get your cave-dwelling chums...

release 2003 complete

MEET THE ANCESTORS



1



2



3

acquired to BC and separate, but Molyneux could probably run

RUNNING WITH DINOSAURS

Blimmy: A camera pan across the landscape recalls the opening scenes of *Jurassic Park* or *Walking With Dinosaurs*, with herds of saurians inhabiting a remote valley of forests and rivers stretching into the distance.



The point game focuses, homophily in our tribe, the ready tribe members that help on about the latest jazy graphics.



For the love of dinosaurs, you just look at what they're doing on an Xbox? It's enough to reduce a headband back to tears.



Just Blimmy great game in the house with a lot of fun, you're always a lot of fun. Project 2000.



Continuing, you just need to take time out to smell the roses, but don't eat them, or they're probably poisonous.

THE DEVELOPER SPEAKS! SELF DEFENCE



XGamer: "So what's going to make BC the definitive dinosaur videogame among many?"

Peter Molyneux, head honcho at Lionhead explains:
If you ever did dinosaur butts when you were a kid or you imagined how big dinosaurs were before you found out that's the word we're creating. A prehistoric word with big teeth that bite. And what you're seeing now is pretty much as far as we can push the simulation. Being a simulation, it allows us to make a game of a kind you haven't seen before."

The reasoning behind Molyneux's comparison, we discover, is that many puzzles are built into *BC*'s terrain. In leading your tribe to find a safer valley—that's the main quest—you may come across an impassable gorge: you might think of making a bridge, but then you're faced with how to fell that promising tree...

Survival demands group effort with prehistoric resources, and this rests on a tagging mechanism reminiscent of Nintendo's *Pikmin*. Tag one or more tribe members to follow you and they'll copy what you do, learning as they go. Then you can untag them and leave them to it. Round up dozens of trained hunters and your single spear throw becomes a deadly rain of flint.

... ZOWIE, CAVIE!

Perhaps the most impressive part of *BC*'s design, however, is a working food chain in which all of the creatures are intelligent, interacting simulations. Those Pteranodons are circling high above to look for fish or

insects, not for cosmetic effect. Brontosaurus lumber down to the watering hole if and when they need a drink.

It's our duty to point out that *BC* is barely half-complete, but the sheer ambition of the project's living, breathing, bleeding world marks it out as one to watch. As game design goes, *BC* could prove an evolution in itself. **Zy Nicholson**

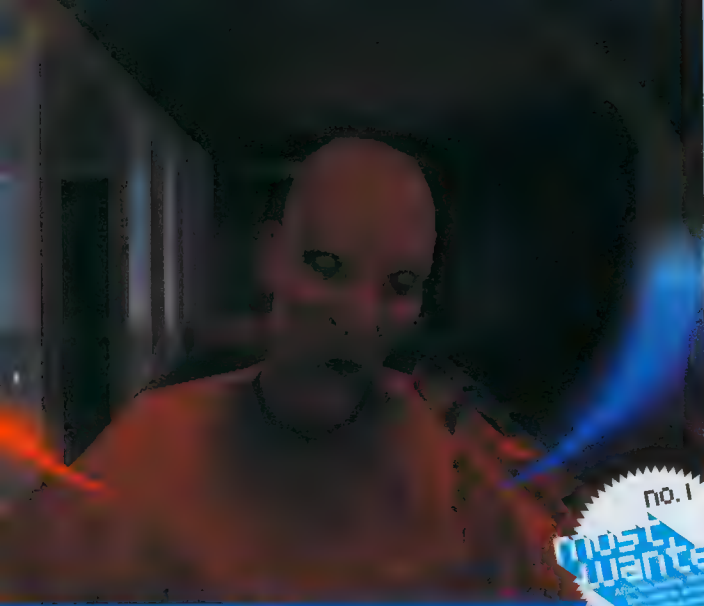
GAMER PREDICTS

- **Bout time** Genre-defying game design in the wake of some pretty formulaic releases
- **What next?** If successful, the dinosaur AI could open up new possibilities for other types of simulated game worlds
- **Hardware** Sets a benchmark for what can be squeezed out of the Xbox
- **Can't wait!** It'll be ready when it's ready, the Molyneux Mantra, so how long will we have to wait for this baby?

As fanatical gamers, we're always lamenting the lack of new ideas. Yet here's one, that's homogenous and with dinosaur battles to boot.

BC: Review sometime after your New Year's party in 2003

bc



CAMERA SHOT

One of the TS2's top features: the camera-controlled, roof-mounted mini-guns. Some you'll need to destroy to complete your mission, but others you'll get to control.

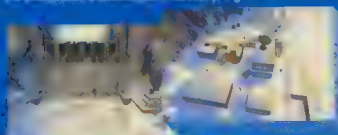


"No guard doesn't know you're in the mess room, and the glass is bulletproof. What to do? Have a crack on that Quickshot joystick."

no. 1
most wanted

DAM BUSTERS

The opening dam level in *TimeSplitters 2* is a classic example of a level that's both a challenge and a fun. You get a nice camera sequence that shows you the dam and the mission objectives.



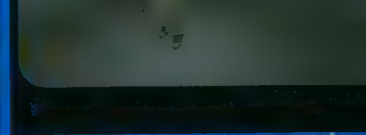
1 1990, Russia, a big dam—and a big dam-buster hangs in the air.



2 Today is quiet: four of your first point of demolition.



3 "Welcome back, you're not going behind you before play begins."



4 "Welcome back, you're not going people out. No messin'."

"You'll see the dam-buster and the dam-buster. He'll be dead before you see him."

hands on

timesplitters 2

Travel through time and blow away some clock-corrupting creepies, courtesy of those fine fellas who wink with a GoldenEye.. release **september complete**



Time-travel's a curious concept. Most scientists would say, "Flux capacitor my arse" when asked if it can be done. *TimeSplitters* flicks a "V" at these cynical, chin-scratching toe-tappers

with an awesome collection of crystals that act as batteries to a futuristic time machine. Time-travel, sorted.

Following on from the PS2 original, *TimeSplitters 2* is a face-tearing first-person shooter from the folk behind the monumental NG4 *GoldenEye*. And as soon as you get your hands on the joy-pad, you'll see the similarities—TS2 kickstarts at a Russian dam but, more importantly, it shares *GoldenEye*'s memorable game mechanics. Instead of you controlling the body with a fixed, protruding hand, TS2 plays with two switchable modes. First, there's the aforementioned fixed-hand set-up, which is fine if you've got a machine gun and your foes lack body-armour—a shower of bullets should see

game

Genre: First-person shooter
Players: 1-16
Movie: None
Code: Stage Alpha

company

Developer: Time Splitters
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Website: www.timesplitters.com



MULTIPLAYER MASSACRE

TS2's deathmatch mode is more *Quake* frag-fest than a gentle *Halo* outing. (All bots are on hand if mates are unavailable)



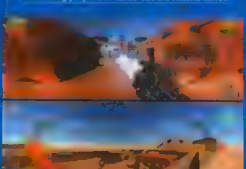
1

A fountain's on hand to wash the flames away!



2

A building on fire, and a turret on top, calculating player two takes out the missile turret



3

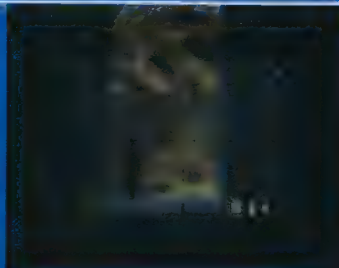
Player one gets plasma-happy while player two waits patiently to land the surprise kill. Mwahaha



Enemies adopt the same attack patterns as they did in *GoldenEye*, using buildings and obstacles as cover, and then jumping out, guns blazing, for maximum destruction. Progress cautiously—and with a fully loaded shotgun—at all times.

TAKING IN THE SIGHTS

The sniper rifle's been done to death, but *GoldenEye* and *TimeSplitters 2* make the best use of it. Why? Because their take on it requires genuine skill, a steady hand—and nerves of steel.



Keep calm now. This guy's body armour demands a direct head shot and a noisy miss means alarm bells ring—not good for ease of passage.

THE DEVELOPER SPEAKS! SELF DEFENCE

XGamer: "Why is your game king of the hill?"

David Doak, managing director at Free Radical Design, the guys behind *TimeSplitters 2*, responds with admirable verve:

"Because it's the daddy! We've got space marines and aliens, it's fast and silky smooth. Everything you see is a first-person straight out of the box!"

YOU'VE BEEN FRAMED

As expected, this military base is flooded with security cameras. You're safe when the light's green, but when it turns red, it won't be long before the cavalry arrives to hunt you down. Always take these digital spies out first.



It's green at the moment, but let the camera turn a few more degrees and it'll spot you then sound the alarm. Shoot it to avoid a showdown.

the job done. But flick modes and you can manoeuvre the trigger-hand separately for ultra-precise targeting. An essential strategy if all you've got is a handgun and you want to inflict a direct headshot. Sure, the control system's a swine to master (as it was *GoldenEye*), but after a little practice, you'll get the hang of it.

Nine circles of hell

There's going to be nine levels in total, each covering a different time and location. The main objective is to track down the TimeSplitter, batter him with a chip-pan and re-pocket the swiped crystal. Simple, if it wasn't for the fact that, à la *Quantum Leap*, you always seem to land in a pile of crap that you need to sort out sub-mission style beforehand ("oh boy..."). As expected, the enemies, backdrops and weapons for each stage are all in keeping with their particular time-frame, which gives each outing a distinctly fresh flavour. You even come decked out in the period's clobber. Marvellous—if you

like swanning about in expensive Japanese suits and Mexican sombreros, that is.

TimeSplitters has truly got us panting like dogs. Visuals, audio, environments... everything just oozes professionalism—and I'm gagging for the review code to turn up so I can unearth more delights. Prepare your funds for a future purchase. **✖ Dan Curley**

GAMER PREDICTS

- **Gorgeous** Pretty enough to flabbergast the unflabbergastable
- **Freantic** Fast and frantic bits will have your heart pounding
- **Longevity** Huge depth and plenty of diverse levels
- **Colossal** The deathmatch mode is one of the most heart-stopping yet—a true frag-fest from the *Quake* masterclass
- **Please, sir...** Some features might be a tad too *GoldenEye*, which is getting a little long in the tooth now

GoldenEye with next generation technicals. Same travel and scary mother monsters. The preview code plays like a wet dream.



timesplitters 2

jurassic park project genesis

Don John Hammond's beard—and build a dino theme park to butcher tourists in. Yes!

release november complete

E Running your own dinosaur park can hardly be the easiest of jobs, what with attractions eating your visitors, fat programmers shutting everything down (then doing a runner with your embryos), and even your own nephew using your cock-ups to swipe your own company. But it doesn't have to be like that... Melbourne developer Blue Tongue is currently beavering away on a management game that let's you square up to the job in a 3D theme park style, no blood spilled. Well, none that can't be discreetly mopped up

This isn't just about opening a new burger bar or fixing entrance fees—you 'create' your own island from scratch, with everything from coastlines, mountains, rivers and lekky-fences on your park-building pallet. Once your masterpiece is complete, it's on to the park caretaking itself—keeping the dinosaurs fed (preferably with farm-stock), maintaining security and setting ticket prices. All good, ever-evolving theme park stuff

Twenty-five of JP's most prominent lounge-lizards have been included, among them the T-Rex, Velociraptor, Albertosaurus and that fictional chicken-like Spinosaurus from *Jurassic Park 3*. And their

instinctive behaviour (flocking, pack-hunting, savaging warm-blooded meat products to death...) looks the part. Best of all, though, you get to play god in the labs. A quick tinker with the test tubes and you can easily tweak aggression and energy levels; pitch a psycho veggiesaur up against a T-Rex-turned-ladyboy and whatever sick experiments twirls yer moustache

There's also a mission mode to spice things up—12 levels, each boasting a fresh (bloody) mess that you've got to clean up. Hunt down escaped Raptors, rescue reckless visitors... and take to the air in a chopper, tranquiliser gun in hand. It all makes for a nice break if the slower-paced simulation needs livening up

Jurassic Park is a way off yet, but a little hands on has raised our hopes no end. The introduction of living creatures gives it more involvement than the carousels and rollercoasters of its theme park cousins, while the mission mode promises great things, if future levels live up to expectation. As long as it captures the wonder of watching dinos frolic, we'll be happy. **X** Dan Curley

GAMER PREDICTS
It's yonks down the line, but this double-helping of arcade and simulation has got our juices flowing like gore from a Raptor victim's belly. **HIT**

game

Genre: Simulation
Players: 1
Modes: Single
Cool stage preview:

company

Developer: Blue Tongue
Publisher: Vivendi
Contact: 01753 600000
www.vivendipublishing.com

WHEN DINOSAURS ATTACK

You can have tremendous fun sticking aggressive dinosaurs together in the same

arena. But why not throw in a few tamed dinosaurs?



- 1 This Sabre and T-Rex duo could never tip, could it? Well, on the contrary...
- 2 While dinosaurs hit like a heavy classic disc of rock...
- 3 ...and, indeed! It's a real treat to see a dinosaur in the water.





Oh dear, it's not looking good for Z. Send a mosquito forward to bring down one of the front runners, and keep an antenna on that radar.



Who needs a Ferrari or Lamborghini when you can ride on the back of a cricket? The weeds provide pick-ups and don't cost a penny. Bargain.

antz extreme racing

Get ready for some heart-pumping racing action, you crazy Calpol-guzzling kidsters...

release august complete ■■■■■■■■■■



Ants can be a right pain in the jacksie. They get in your shoes, walk off with scraps from your picnic and then, when they get a-talking, it has to be the whining voice of Woody Allen.

Yes, indeed, it's what you bought your Xbox for: a racing game where you pick your favourite character from the *Antz* film and drive around ponds and plant-pots firing wasps at each other and going "Yippee!" a lot. As you can see from the screenshots, *Antz* is yet another colourful, child-like racer from the *Mario Kart* school of racing. You start off with Z and Bala, but more insectile folk unlock themselves as you progress. Superb—if you're a fan of the movie.

Mind you, the game offers a fair few twists. Apart from the usual racing against computer opponents to win, there's time-trials, slalom and various other modes

of transport. Meanwhile, pick-ups, in the shape of glowing dandelions, serve up everything from speed-ups (causing an impressive screen blur) to a hoard of wasps (think Red Shells) that aim right for your opponent's backside. A four-player split-screen's on show for those who prefer their intelligence to have the human touch.

Antz is shaping up into a decent enough kiddy-racer—the cute levels will definitely keep the little 'uns amused, while the simple handling ensures easy accessibility. However, players over ten will hardly find it their cup of char. **✖ Dan Curley**

GAMER PREDICTS

A colourful little racer that will keep the tots smiling—but the characters' childish yabberings will drive big 'uns insane.



game

Genre: BMX
Players: 1-4
Movies: None
Code stage: Pre-alpha

company

Developer: Z-Axis
Publisher: Z-Axis
Contact: Gaming@z-axis.co.uk

dave mirra bmx xxx

Bikes, boobs and swimming pools full of wee. It's all in a day's work for Dave Mirra.

release september complete ■■■■■■■■■■



"All new female riders, each with realistic physics for their hair, body and clothes," trumpets the blurb for Dave Mirra's new trick-heavy outing. And 'body' is certainly the operative word

here. For the first time in Xbox history, we get to see topless ladies

This BMXer is about showing off a little more than usual. One of the challenges you'll face is a kind of strip-poker freestyle competition, where the loser ditch his clothes and, if she happens to be a lass, it's tops off. The game's 'edginess' doesn't stop with naked flesh either—urinating brats and countless swearing characters keep the 'XXX' count up. In one scene, you must get two dogs humping, to stop them 'laying eggs' in your stunt patch.

It's easy to sneer and assume such 'mature themes' are incorporated as a trite, punter-pleasing gimmick—

and, hey, you'd probably be right. But at this stage, *DMBMX XXX* (looks like a spelling mistake, dunnit?) also looks like a capable and well-wrought BMX game in its own right. With a slick engine, 2,000-plus tricks, huge tracks, loads of multiplayer modes and an online global ranking system, it's looking feature-packed and hot to trot. It may not give big *Tony Hawk's* a run for his money, but then Z-Axis knows its onions—as the developer has proved already with its PS2 version of *Aggressive Inline*.

So, time will tell. And, let's face it, any game with a create-a-nudey-rider feature has to be at least briefly interesting... **✖ Al Bickham**

GAMER PREDICTS

While the prospect of yet another extreme sports game is yawnsome, at least *Dave Mirra BMX XXX* is trying to be different.



All in all, there are 15 riders to choose from. And 2000-odd tricks? That'll keep the learning curve up. Prepare to forget all you've learned in *THPS3*.



"Anything you can do, I can do better... and I can flash me knickers while I'm doing it." The war of the sexes comes to the freestyle BMX world...

reviews

WARNING! CASH FLOW DANGER AHEAD

Take evasive action. Never buy a game until you've read XGamer's mutton-torching reviews.



select

54 **BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER**

The stake swinger has finally made it—but was she worth the wait? Not really.

58 **LEGENDS OF WRESTLING**

Most of the sport's greatest legends pile in for another collection of canvas-slapping dance routines.

60 **HUNTER THE RECKONING**

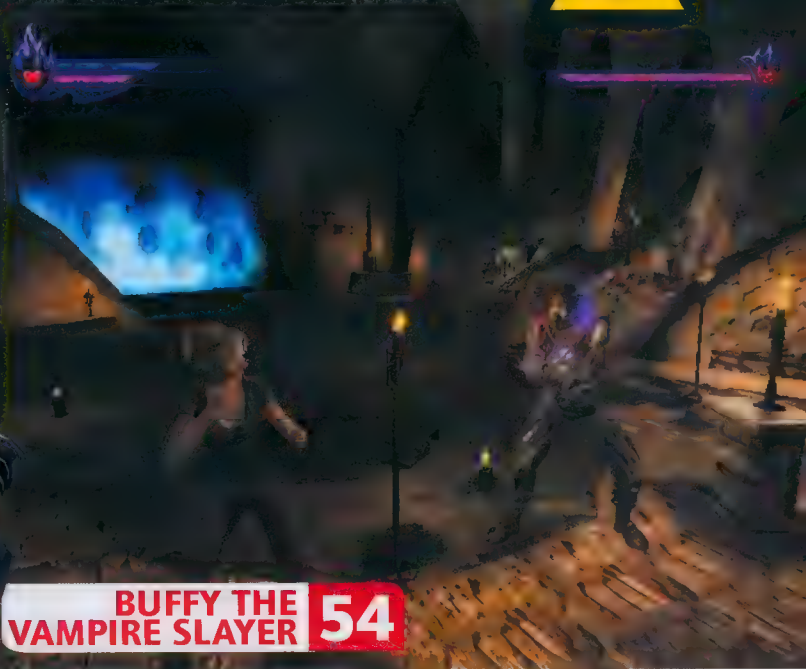
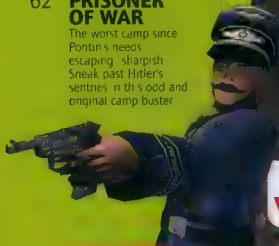
Countlet clone? Haunting—the thought of spazzing £45 on such a miserable drivel, that is.

61 **SLAM TENNIS**

Wimbledon's got the nation in a ball-bating frenzy—perfect timing for a tennis release, then.

62 **PRISONER OF WAR**

The worst camp since Pontin's needs escaping sharpish. Sneak past Hitler's sentries in this odd and original camp buster.



BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER 54

67 **TRIPLE PLAY BASEBALL 2002**

The land of the rising Hot Dog has served up another example of how US citizens like to spend their Saturday afternoons.

NTSC Vs PAL

US or Japanese code reviewed in order to get a timely report to you. Major changes before PAL release are rare. But we will keep you fully informed if they do occur.

European releases are all PAL code. If publishers delay PAL review copies then we will review NTSC in order to give you an accurate picture of a game before purchase.



PRISONER OF WAR **62**

PRISONER OF WAR 62

You'll have read the review, but... hmm... that's not entirely satisfying is it? What's needed is a handy digest of the conclusions. Something to round it off like a couple of kebabs after a pub crawl. Sorted!

The meat of the matter: it may look and sound great but is it actually challenging and fun too?

Overall Rating The important bit. All the parts, sifted, argued, and scussed and decided upon.

Graphics **B+** *easy to work with, a little strange, but the most impressive*

Gameplay **D** *not too good, a little bit of a mess, but some ideas are welcome*

Accessibility **B** *impaired, not too hard, but a lot of controls, much more than you need*

Depth **B-** *keeping playing the same thing, but some ideas are welcome*

4

OVERALL **B** *A bloated eating machine that offers little new—wait for the sequel.*

W. I you swap t n a week? Or w l you stx treasure in the old fo k's home?

The good, the bad
the ugly neatly summed up in a
sentence

HIT LIST Every game, from
The Sims to the horrific,
helps your digestion.

HI-SCORE Gaming's Most

TACKLE the month's

X-STATE

STATE

ANDY LOWE
Specialist in
Loves

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

Meat feast with added pepperoni? Or a load of mouldy old black pudding? Time for a heart-to-heart with The Slayer.



On sale
Thursday 8 August

game

Price £44.99

Genre
Action-adventure
Players 1
Supports
Memory Unit
Version PAL
Moves None

company

Developer
The Collective
Publisher
Electronic Arts
Contact
0870 243 2435
www.ea.com



Here's a devastatingly plain observation for you: life is full of different activities. From day to day, we find ourselves doing lots of different things. Making a cuppa, stroking the cat, blowing up gigantic alien ring-worlds. You get the picture.

And, given time, we repeat many such activities, because they bring us pleasure. But we rarely repeat them from minute to minute—unless we have to. Why? Because they soon grow tedious. Which brings us to Buffy's digital debut, and the problems it presents.

Stake a vamp. Find a key. Stake a few more vamps. Open another door. Meet some new creatures. Stake 'em. Find a switch. Stake some vamps. Flick switch. Open door. Yadda, yadda, yadda, ad infinitum, ad nauseum. Half an hour in, and you're wondering where it's all going. An hour in, and you realise: up it's own jackie. This game's so obsessed with vampire-killing and ground-level puzzles, it doesn't seem to acknowledge or care—that there's someone playing it for pleasure.

It's the same old story. Here's a game with so much going for it, but any potential bubbles of fun

are rudely pricked by repetition. The engine's good and solid. The fighting elements work well. It's graphically accomplished and technically sound. But the gameplay mechanics are done to death—as they are in a million other games. There's nothing experimental or innovative. It plays in a style that everyone understands, and boasts a learning curve as flat as a witch's tit (no offence, Willow).

It's all a bit of a waste really. For with a little more thump and thunder in the originality department,

WILLOW? A WALKING ANTI-HEROIN CAMPAIGN IN A HOME-KNIT JUMPER...

Buffy The Vampire Slayer could've been an absolute belter. As it stands, there's a lot it does get right—such as the characters. While Giles, Zander, Spike and the rest of the cast bear a passable resemblance to their TV counterparts, Buffy's actually extremely lifelike. The one exception is Willow; with her pasty complexion and red-rimmed eyes, she looks like nothing more than a walking anti-heroine campaign in a home-knit jumper. *Brr-r.*

DEAD CERT Whacking vampires is where it's at, and while combat in *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* is overdone to the point of wrist-slashing tedium, it's fundamentally sound and, initially, pretty good fun. Your fighting abilities revolve around punch and kick buttons, which can be tied together into a number of different throws and combos. As you work through the game, you unlock new Slayer skills, which rely on Slayer Power (doses of which are collected from dead baddies) to perform. You can then mix these incandescent, unblockable über-moves in with your standard repertoire for fruity damage bonuses and guaranteed knockdowns. Of course, pile-driving three feet of pointy pine through your quarry's

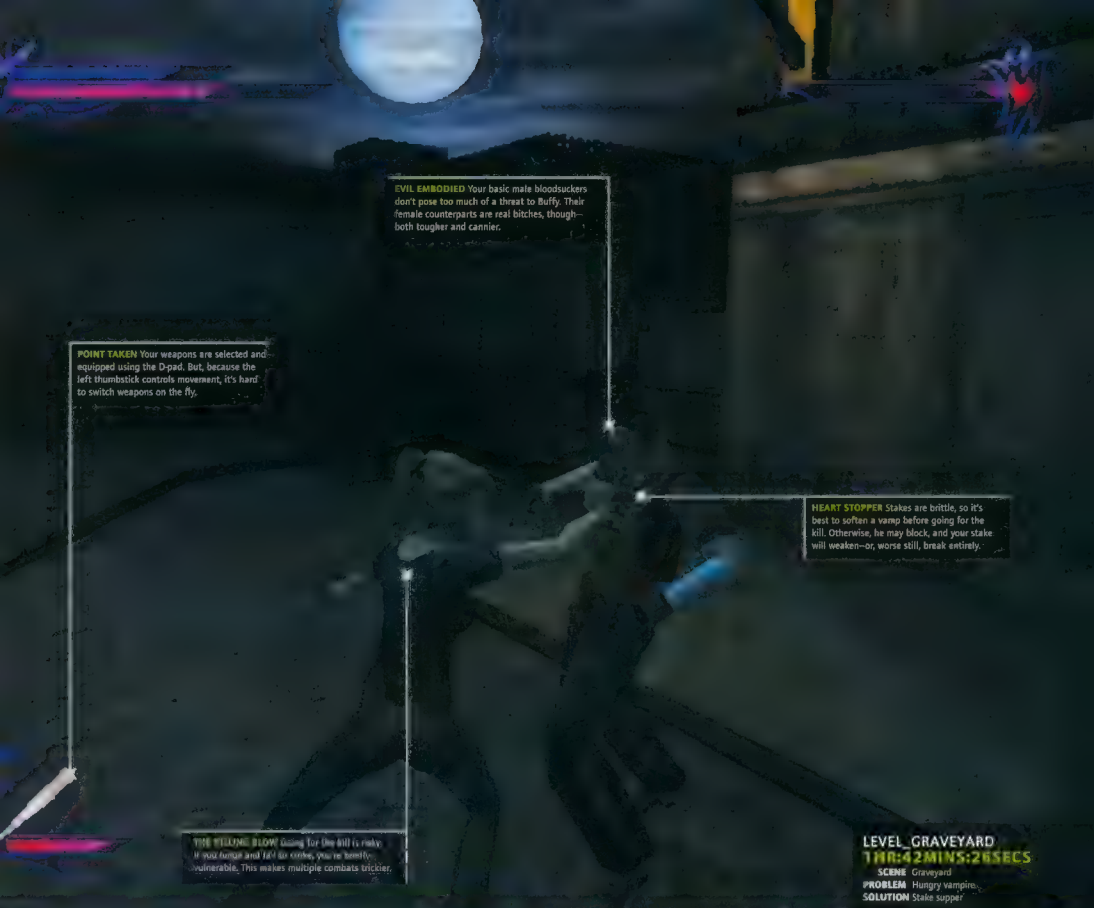


SLAY BELLS The purple on-screen bar is your Slayer Power. By whacking combinations of punch and kick in three-hit sequences, you'll perform combos, hold down kick or punch on the last strike and you'll perform a flashy, unblockable Slayer Power attack. Specific single Slayer moves are also unlocked as you progress.

DEATH FROM AFAR Ranged weapons, such as the zoom-enabled crossbow and the water cannon, become available later on. Fill the latter with holy water and hellfire to roast the dark ones to a crisp

LANG ON TARGET





EVIL EMBODIED Your basic male bloodsuckers don't pose too much of a threat to Buffy. Their female counterparts are real bitches, though—both tougher and cannier.

POINT BAKEN Your weapons are collected and equipped using the D-pad. But, because the left thumbstick controls movement, it's hard to switch weapons on the fly.

HEART STOPPER Stakes are brittle, so it's best to soften a vamp before going for the kill. Otherwise, he may block, and your stake will weaken—or, worse still, break entirely.

THE MEALING BLOW Going for the kill is risky. If you charge and fail the strike, you're heavily vulnerable. This makes multiple combats trickier.

LEVEL: GRAVEYARD
TIME: 42MINS:26SECS

SCENE Graveyard
PROBLEM Hungry vampire.
SOLUTION Stake supper.

HOME ON THE RANGE



1



2



3



BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

FUN IN THE SUN

Evil she-bitch vampire attacks! She's tough, so what do you do? Treat her to a little uplifting UV treatment, natch.



1



2



5

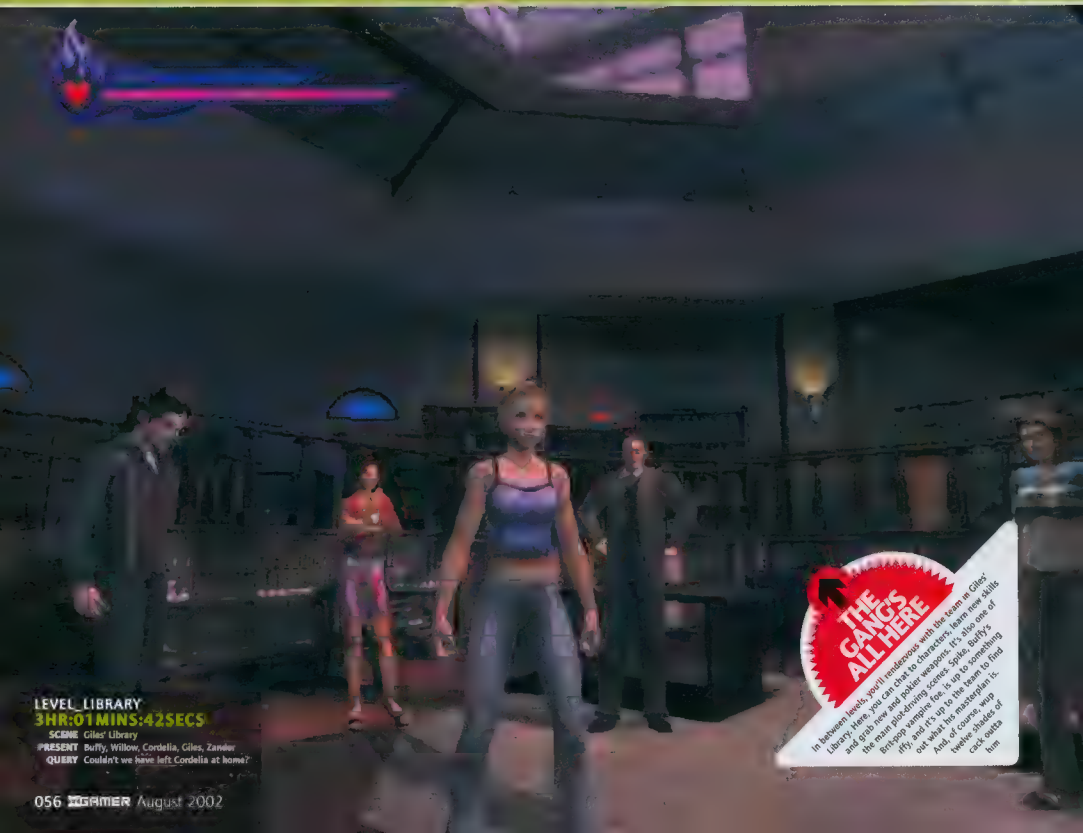


4



3

TIP: Sunlight burns vampires. To undead into the light to cool



LEVEL: LIBRARY

3HR:01MINS:42SECS

SCENE: Giles' Library

PRESENT: Buffy, Willow, Cordelia, Giles, Xander

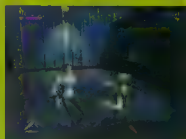
QUERY: Couldn't we have left Cordelia at home?

THE GANG'S ALL HERE

In between levels, you'll rendezvous with the team in Giles' Library. Here, you can chat to characters, learn new skills and grab new and better weapons. Spidee, Buffy's little winged pal, is also here to help you out. It's also one of the main plot-driving scenes. Spidee, Buffy's little winged pal, is also here to help you out. It's also one of the main plot-driving scenes. Spidee, Buffy's little winged pal, is also here to help you out. It's also one of the main plot-driving scenes.

(knocking the
'em!)

CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

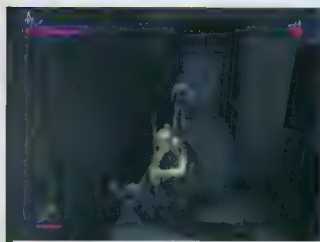


RIP IT UP!

NEW LEGENDS
3/10, XGAMER 05
Feudal Japanese
thumper with
va-va-va-va.

MAX PAYNE
9/10, XGAMER 02
The king of third-
person action—
Poo-gin optional.

BLOOD OMEN
6/10, XGAMER 03
Ify combat and
samey action. No Pulp.



Right on cue. No stake? Then keep your eyes peeled and improvise. Here we see Buffy getting busy with a pool cue. As long as it's pointy, it'll do.

CHUCKING A WEAKENED VAMP ON AN UPTURNED CHAIR LEG USUALLY DOES THE TRICK

➔ dark heart is the coup de grace to any engagement, and to this end you'll find stakes littered throughout the game-world. They weaken with use, though, so if you find yourself short on wood you'll need to improvise—throwing a weakened vampire onto an upturned chair-leg usually does the trick, or into a shaft of sunlight if you're fortunate enough to find one in the gloomy locations. Remember: if you fail to stake a bloodsucker, he'll be back for more when he gets his strength back.

VAMPIRE OVERKILL There are other rotters to tackle, such as mouldering skellies and fiery demons, which don't require the pokey treatment, just a sound thrashing. In addition, you'll periodically face boss-beasts, which demand, in the time-honoured tradition, a patterned approach of dodges and attacks. All in all, plenty to get your teeth into. *Cough*

But the neat and satisfying nature of the combat is soon rendered dull by several key problems. First, there's just too much of it. Why not have fewer engagements, but draw them out a bit longer? Then perhaps the admittedly decent combat sequences might feel a bit more special. Games such as *Halo* work well because every scrap you get into is an event in its own right. In *Buffy*, you get the sense that all the fights are rolling into one.

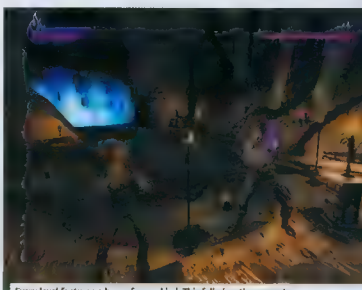
Second, the odd moments of glory (for example, where you pull a stake out of one vampire, then deliver a backwards heart-stopper to his colleague standing behind you) are high-on impossible to repeat. Granted, you can get better at fighting as you familiarise yourself with the controls and the moves, but the kind of cinematic take-downs that games like *Max Payne* allow you to choreograph just aren't

possible. And this is down to the fact that some moves are performed by blind luck—the circumstances have to be *just right* for you to implement them. By the same token, you often feel a sense of anticlimax when you do enact such swanky moves as, more often than not, you haven't execute them. It's hard to feel proud of something that isn't entirely of your making.

Finally, multiple combats can be frustrating. When you're playing on the normal or hard difficulty levels, a gang of three low-level vampires can be the death of you, simply because it's impossible to dodge all their blows at once. You have to run away, deal with one while the others give chase, and basically defeat them in turn. It's the way you *have* to play... not the way you *want* to play.

SMARM NOT CHARM But the final nail in the coffin? The way your game is auto-saved between levels, and *nowhere else*. Not being able to choose where you save your game is fine, but why not have a staggered series of auto-save points throughout the levels? Then you wouldn't have to tear your hair out and bark yourself hoarse every time you get mashed, and are subsequently forced to repeat the ENTIRE LEVEL AGAIN. Bog off.

And a big soz to the *Buffy* fans out there, but even you will become tired of the incessant, repetitive, snidey backchat and one-liners that everyone in the game trots out. Honestly, when you've heard Buffy smugly quip the post-stake line "Guess you wish you'd stayed home tonight!" at the rate of 20 per hour, things turn a little sour. The decently-scripted cut-scenes aside, such chatter provides no sense of true dialogue. It's just random mush thrown into the air for effect, and doesn't give you the sense that Buffy and her foes are interacting on anything but a fist-meets-face level. All in all, there's something rotten in Sunnydale. **XX** Al Bickham



Every level features a boss of some kind. This fella has the power to summon skeletons. Cut through them, though, and he's a bit of a softie.

CRATED BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

Graphics 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Totally smooth and competent.

Accessibility 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Plug and play, baby.

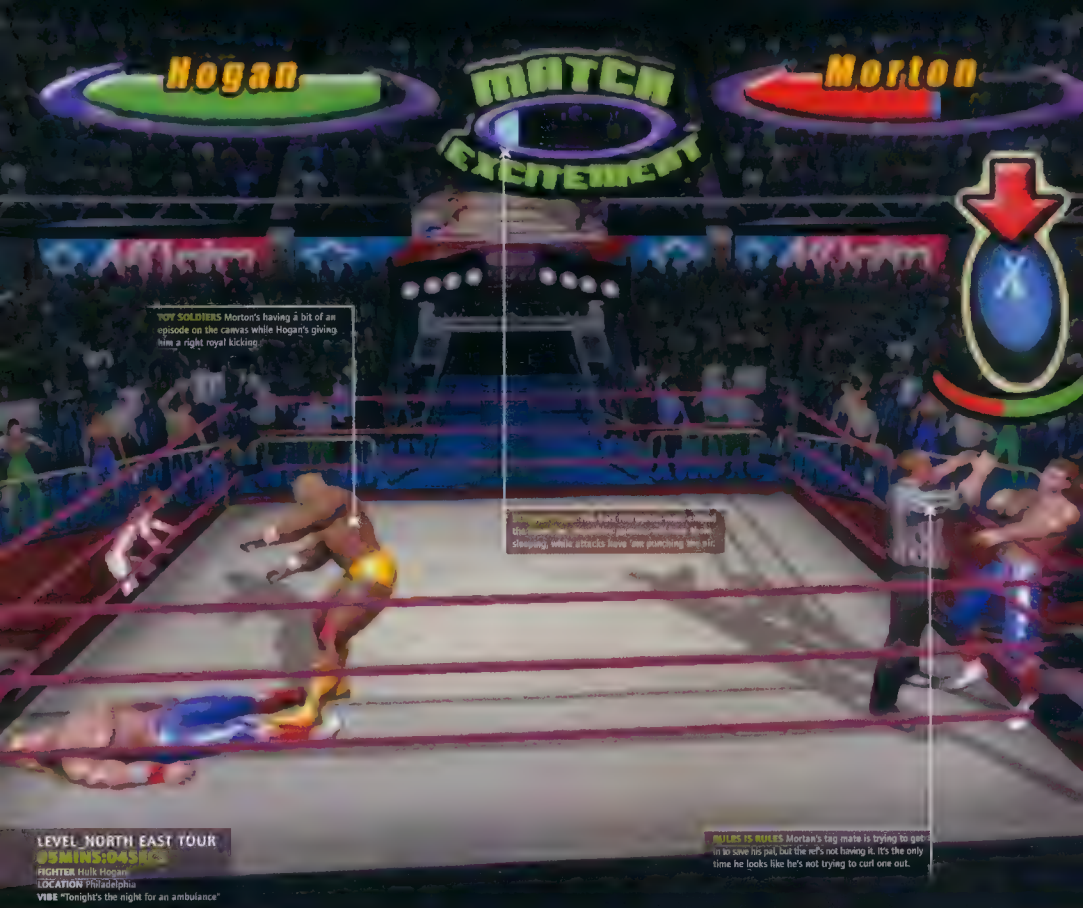
*****GAMER VERDICT***** A sound but yawnsome affair. Fans will be coffin into their tea.

Reviewer's hi-score: level 2, Normal: Three vampires off in 21 seconds

Gameplay 1 2 3 4 5
In a by good, but soon repeat live.

Depth 1 2 3 4
Whack stuff. Collect things. Open doors.

6



TOP SOLDIERS Morton's having a bit of an episode on the canvas while Hogan's giving him a right royal kicking.

IT'S A GOOD THING you took your time, you've won! This is a good thing, you've won! This is a good thing, you've won! This is a good thing, you've won!

LEVEL: NORTH EAST TOUR

USMINS:D4S1C

FIGHTER: Hulk Hogan

LOCATION: Philadelphia

VIBE: "Tonight's the night for an ambulance"

PHILLS IS ROULERS Morton's tag mate is trying to get in to save his pal, but he's not having it. It's the only time he looks like he's not trying to cut one out.

CREATE A LEGEND

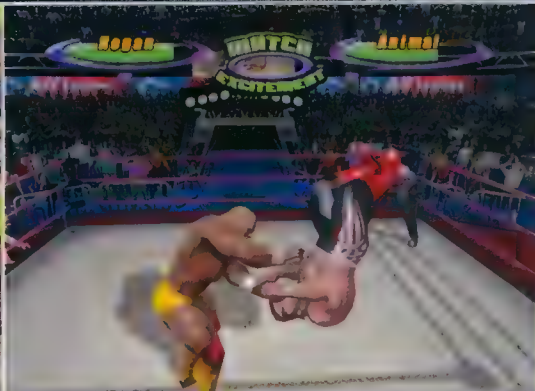
You can build yourself a whole new character from scratch, perfect for any writer wanting to raise the ruck out of his editor. While he's in L.A. getting a lap dance next to the ES show. Apart from the usual brand choices and hairstyles, you can choose how the crowd responds, the music and even if you're actually the one there's always the ladies' choice.



It's a bit late for our ad, but many thanks to all right on. It's time for some replayed handling.



Like in real life, in a videogame, Hogan seems to be enjoying himself, and the ruck is taking the show.



You probably won't be the next of fights, you're certainly down to get your head around the combo system before you reach this. Check out the crowd. Springing to life with all the number of pay-per-view characters.

DIRTY BOY

XGAMER
FAVE BIT

the referee is constantly crouched in a cheese squeeze animation, he even cries the fighters in the same Mr Brown is touching cloth stance. You just wanna punch his belly to speed up his mud-exodus. Distasteful

 reviews

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

Wrestling's most legendary showmen, mixed together in one big pot.



On sale
Now

game

Price £44.99

Genre Wrestling

Players 1-4

Supports

Dolby Digital

Version PAL

Movies

www.acclaim.com/games/legendsofwrestling/movies

company

Developer

Accclaim

Publisher

Accclaim

Contact

0207 344 5000

www.acclaim.com



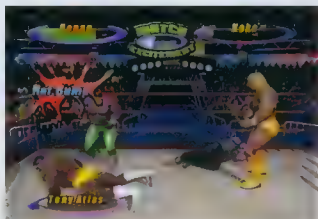
Ever since Hulk Hogan picked up Andrea The Giant and flushed his head down the toilet, our wrestling hearts have always belonged across the Atlantic. British wrestlers became laughable while the Yankee stars

became blonde himbos with huge pay packets.

Legends Of Wrestling is another in a long line of wrestling games that, while coughing up a few unique touches of its own, does little to step out of the ring and go off in a new direction. What it does do, though, is let you pick a fighter not just from the current crop, but from a whole host of oldies from wrestling's history. 42 fighters have been selected, from the entire Von Erich family to Rob Van Dam. Like *Knockout Kings*, it is to let you chuck the OAP fighters into the ring with present day pups.

TAG ALONG Virtually every sports game has the same set of options these days. In the exhibition match you can take up to four players in the ring, either on their jack-jones or with a partner. The objective couldn't be simpler, leave the arena on your feet—and not on a stretcher and you've won.

There's also a career and tournament mode. Pick



If you get bored of smacking your opponent, you can chin the annoying ref, which gets the crowd all lively.

a wrestler and tour the US beating the holy mary out of all the other wrestling types. Or you can enter a tournament for the usual knockout bout-by-bout play

YOU'D BE FORGIVEN FOR THINKING YOU'RE PLAYING GOLF

You can squeeze some fun out of it, but not much.

Probably *Legends's* best feature is the combo linking system. In fact, you could be forgiven for thinking you're playing a round of golf. An icon swings around your bar and if you time your button press correctly, a new attack is carried out. This same system also enables counter-strikes, even if you're on the receiving end of a complex piledriver. When the opponent starts his attack you'll be given the chance to intercept—if you time it right. It's a pain in the arse getting used to it, but it makes a huge difference compared to the usual button mashing found so often in grappling games.

But alas, it's not to be. The fact is, *Legends Of Wrestling* is boring and never creates tension worth fighting for. If you like your wrestling mean and meaty, you're going to find this a little lean. **✖ Dan Curley**



There are weapons all over the place outside the ring, musical instruments and planks of wood can be found under the ring.

QUICK START

Seize the moment! Fight-fans, the fast way to get over the ropes and into the action.

EXHIBIT A If you just wanna get in the ring without faffing about, exhibition mode enables you to do just that. Pick two players and use the motionless wrestler as a training bag.

SEMI-INCREDIBLE HULK Come on, let's face it, you're gonna want to pick him to start off. He's a big swine with all the right moves.

TAKE SOME STICK You'll have to read the manual to learn all the right moves, but to get handy on your first fight, **⬅** is strike and **⬆** is attack. Hold the left thumbstick **⬅** or **⬆** for middle strength attacks and **⬆** or **⬅** for strong then hit the button of choice.

RATED

Graphics

1 2 3 4 5

There's nothing even remotely Xbox on snow

Accessibility

1 2 3 4

You'll have to read the manual twice before it becomes crystal

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

Gameplay

1 2 3 4 5

Inventive combo system, but slow pace keeps the pulse tame

Depth

1 2 3 4 5

Short career, but create a legend adds a few extra breaths of life

GAMER VERDICT Another mediocre wrestling game, one for fanatics only.

Renewer's hi-score: 45% popularity at Boston

5

HUNTER THE RECKONING

Things that go bump in the night are out on the town, in their numbers, numbers, so many numbers...



On sale
Friday 5 July

game

Price £44.99

Genre
Slash-'em-up

Players 1-4

Supports
Memory Unit,
Dolby Digital

Version PAL

Movies www.interplay.com/~neteract/
D type: 2

company

Developer
High Voltage

Publisher
Virgin

Contact
020 7551 4222
www.interp.ac.uk



All is not as it seems. Apparently, we live in a world controlled by creatures of foulness that gain from our pain. Werewolves roam the streets eating the good folk like frogs eating flies, vampires don't understand the term 'last orders' while lapping up claret on a neck-crawl. It's a good job the Hunters are here to protect us.

Or rather, it isn't. *Hunter: The Reckoning* has been built up to be the new *Gauntlet*. It's easy to see why. The top-down view, four characters, fixed scrolling and ludicrous number of baddies does indeed give it a *Gauntlet* feel. But, as we discovered with *Gauntlet: Dark Legacy* (XGamer 04 2/10) trying to be like something of yesteryear isn't always a good thing.

MISHMASH The trouble is *Hunter* is trying to cut 'n' shut so many other ideas that it fails to pull any of them together successfully. The plot's wet behind the ears for a start, the entire game is like a poor episode of *Buffy*. Dark forces are painting the city blood-red and you have to use your Hunter powers to put an end to their zombie on-goings. You've got everything from close combat axe/sword weapons to ammo hungry machine guns and crossbows. You'll need them. After you've hacked your way through the first easy subway level and you're on the cold, dark streets, you'll be battling millions of zombies. Actually, not millions. Infinite—it's never ending and the game seems to be short one of *Gauntlet*'s trademark features, the ability to take out the generators. *Mishmash*.

Hunter's plagued with fundamental flaws. The set camera means you have to run into the screen sometimes, which usually has you plowing into a baddie. The levels haven't really been designed, they're just plain old walk-from-here-to-there and kill a few thousands zombies while you're at it. It's as tired as gameplay gets, and it doesn't offer anything visual for all the tedious.

Hunter also tries to be scary with corpses littering the streets and zombie moans and groans. Sadly, the result is more *Benny Hill* than *Silent Hill*, there's no claustrophobia or tension, it's just hack-shoot-hack-shoot-sod-this-where's *Halo*.

Highly unrecommended. **X Dan Curley**

RATED HUNTER THE RECKONING

More repetitive and dated than a long line of evenly placed dates. Go hunting for action elsewhere.

3

Reviewer's 7th score: Minutes spent laughing at game: 45

NO FEAR!
XGAMER STATE!
Virtually everything in *Hunter* strikes of the screen, but what made us stand up and laugh the most was the attempt at creating fear. It's about as spine chilling as a parachute jump from a cat's back.

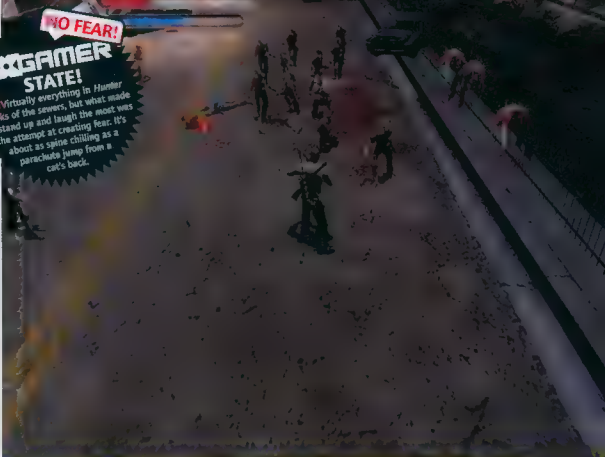


Image: Thanks for the ride, but this Black Hawk ride wasn't



A HUNTER'S LOT

The game's loaded with lots of little cutscenes ordaining the hellfire taking place around you. After being battle with a big boy, a Hell-raiser extra pops his head in and tells you to take care of this little girl. Awwww.



3

2



SLAM TENNIS

Infogrames' virtual court contender volleys for Xbox supremacy—and wins. Just.

STRIKE!
XGAMER POWER SERVE
The better serves you make, and the longer and more spectacular your rallies, the more you charge up your power bar. Once it's maxed out, you can unleash a spectacular high-speed blast—to deadly effect.



As the Xbox continues to bulk out its game catalogue, it's become obvious there's a glaring gap. No console can lay claim to greatness until it boasts a brilliant tennis game. You better believe it. But if you're thinking

about playing Wimbledon on a console, only Sega's *Virtua Tennis* has warranted the strawbermes and cream treatment up until now. Its chalk-suffling precision and ease of play created a benchmark which continues to smash rivals with a scowl that'd make McEnroe proud. Anything less is swiftly stamped 'could do better' and left to practise in the back yard.

But now *Slam Tennis*, which is neither as immediate nor as solid as *Virtua Tennis*—shots on the backline are difficult to judge, for instance—has hit centre court. The controls are easy enough, if a little unexplained (a more obvious training section would've helped), but play is rewardingly simple whether you're scooping up balls that have just trickled over the net or delivering blistering backhand volleys. In multiplayer mode, you're guaranteed exciting rallies and tip-of-your-racquet dives.

ARE YOU BEING SERVED?

There's plenty of variety on offer too. You can smack balls with the kids in the graffiti-smeared suburbs of New York or don your whites in the more officious tennis arenas of grass and clay. And, as in *Virtua Tennis*, there are arcade sub-games to help you hone your skills: pop balloons, burst beachballs, volley the ball into moving hoops... But best of the bunch is a *Breakout*-style exercise in wall-busting (see box, right).

A mix of characters are available to play with, too, from real-life racketmeisters, such as Henman and Kafelnikov, to fictional ballspinners with the stats to match. Hammer your way through the championship modes and you can unlock many more, along with new courts and spangly new outfits. Just don't expect it to come all at once. The championship modes are genuinely tough, and pitched perfectly to challenge the solo player. **Jim Rossignol**



On sale
Saturday 27 July

game

Price £44.99

Genre
Tennis

Players 1-4

Supports
Memory unit,
Widescreen

Version PAL

company

Developer
Infogrames

Publisher
Infogrames

Contact
0161 827 8061
www.infogames.co.uk



Realworld players meet and discuss their game with the beautifully animated but fictional denizens of *Slam Tennis*.

FOUR FUN TIMES

A range of sub-games provide an entertaining distraction from the central game, and enable you to hone your skills at the same time.



1. Recently played well in a match.
2. Hype your success.
3. Watch some sun in this *Pangloss* match.
4. Of course, the real fun is to be had in the four-player doubles version.

RATED SLAM TENNIS

The Perfect Tennis Game? No, not quite, but it's the best game, set and match so far. One to be recommended.

Reviewers' 10 score: Managed 12 aces in a set

7



RED CALL AREA Stand here when you're told to. *(The call area is a red dot on the map.)* Search—and a grim stink in the 'cooler'.

GERMAN GUARD He has a gun and no sense of humour. Either do as he says or been out of his sight when you're doing something 'naughty'.

GARDNER STONE You, flash American pilot ('Hey, Fritz, Watch the hair!'). Wears a confiscatable-jacket with Betty Grable type figure on the back.

SENSITIVE TIME Missions must be completed in increasing light time-windows. Keep your eye on the clock and an ear on Red Call announcements.

WHO'S WHO? And where are they looking? Keep your peepers on those 'perception' comes—alerted guards turn into ziggy red triangles.

LEVEL 2 (STALAG LUFT)
2 HOURS:30 MINS

SCENE After an escape attempt from the holding camp, you're dumped here—higher security and with some typically tea-sipping Brits for company. Suck up to the 'Escape Committee' by half-finching a tape player and broadcasting some morale-raising music over the tannoy. *(Shawshank Redemption style.)*

HOW Very, very, very carefully.

YOU CAN'T RUN BUT YOU CAN HIDE

The rules of this engagement are: Prisoner Of War, are a bit on the random side. Unlike other: Similar games: where, once you're spotted, there's always the option to quietly slip outside the guard's field of vision until he gets fed up looking for you. Here things are more difficult. If you're out in the open (say, waving), the guard will whistle, blow a warning, and give you a few seconds before firing his German rifle. Even if you do manage to get mobile, the guards can tell that escape by standing a few yards away and pointing a gun. But if you're lucky enough to be spotted entering a door or near some obvious cover, you can always 'hide' your way out or rouble instead.



You need to get into the barracks ahead. Prisoner—there's a guard standing by the door and his field of vision would catch you if you tried to sneak in the front way.



Just drop down and crawl under the foot and he'll seem to be about you. There's even a jolly chain of contraband here.

SAY AGAIN?

XGAMER SHOCKER

Non-essential conversation options keep on repeating, enabling you to repeatedly ask the same guy the same question—and get the same answer! Having more variety would've upped the realism stakes.

reviews

PRISONER OF WAR

Drop the gun, forget about that gymnastics horse ruse, and polish your brains for a sneak-and-snoop marathon, World War 2-style.



On sale
Friday 5 July

game

Price £44.99

Genre
Stealth/Adventure

Players 1

Supports
Dolby Digital,
Memory Unit,
Wi-Fi

Version PAU

Movies
<http://www.codemasters.com/redirect/redirect.php?url=/pow/front.htm>

company

Developer
Wise Games

Publisher
Codemasters

Contact
01926 814132
www.codemasters.co.uk



Action? Stealth? Strategy? How about some tension? A lot of tension. Tiptoeing around, dodging guards, skulking in the bushes praying that the edge of that searchlight won't clip your bootlace... But no bopping the bad

guys from behind, or knifing a stubborn patrol guard as he steps out of sight of a colleague. And definitely no gas grenades or poison-darts or dead-eye antics with muffled sniper-rifles. *POW* is a good game which expertly covers all the usual stealth bases, but it's too calculated and oppressive to be a lot of fun.

No tension release, y'see. The designers would probably argue that WW2 POW camps were open, low-security places which relied on a kind of mutual distrust and disrespect between guards and prisoners. Anyone bold enough to attack their captors was usually shot—mainly to keep the peace. But you can't really plead realism with a game which features guards who are instantly baffled by the fiendish trick of crawling under a hut in plain sight. Refreshingly open-ended, with some slick mission design and a nice cinematic air, sure, but *POW* desperately needs a bit of artistic licence to liven things up.

CAMP BEHAVIOUR So, at the beginning of WW2, you're an American Flight Officer and all-round reconnaissance guy, Captain Lewis Stone. While poking around some suspicious activity in German



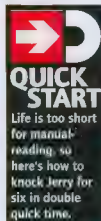
Captain Stone struts into the holding camp, dishing out a few smart comments to a disgruntled commander. This cannot be skipped

POW camps, Stone is shot down, parachutes into the hands of the Hun and is banged up in one of the camps. The first mission, while not easy, is a bit of a trainer. It's a holding camp—small, low-risk and with only one or two fellow prisoners. Game-time is split into sections based on the camp routine (meals, exercise...) and everyone is more or less free to wander around at will—provided they turn up for Roll Call and stay put after lights out.

You talk to the prisoners, pick up information, and progress by completing errands which usually require a deviation from the regime and a naughty trip to forbidden territory. If you're caught—and get your hands up when you're told to—you'll be dumped back at your barracks with all items confiscated. In the first section, the game eases you in by having another

NO BOPPING THE BAD GUYS FROM BEHIND, OR KNIFING A STUBBORN PATROL GUARD...

inmate steal your stuff back for you. Later, though, if you lose it, it's gone for good. Planning is all in this game. You may need to gain access to a distant store-room, which requires an illicit hop over a fence. Trying to do this in daylight is stupid, because the fence is too central and the store-



Life is too short for manual-reading, so here's how to knock Jerry for six in double quick time.

BE A GOOD BOY Follow the routine for a day cycle—be where you should be bang on time, note the guards' patterns, stick with your fellow inmates and keep consulting the map to get your bearings. It's the best way to get a feel for where everything is

STOCK UP ON 'CURRENCY' During the first sickbay mission, root around in—and under—as many buildings as you dare. You'll find plenty of juicy contraband to swap

DON'T DO WHAT THEY TELL YA Go everywhere, anytime. You'll be snouted—and shot at, but you'll learn a lot about the game's boundaries



➔ room too well-guarded. Trying to do it at night, without a little boot-polish camouflage, is equally daft. But where do you get the boot-polish? And where's the key to unlock the store-room when—if you even get there?

The pace is slow because margin for error is tiny. Guard intelligence is limited to their visual abilities—keep an eye on the radar and stay out of their range. If they do spot you, then it's practically impossible to sneak away. Unless there's something obvious to hide under, of course. In fairness, the designers have to overbalance things in your favour to offset the realism—hence the frustration at not having the odd rock to clunk on the head of a pesky Nazi.

The *Metal Gear Solid*-like radar is clear and perfectly workable for route-planning—although it doesn't give you a totally accurate sense of the guards' perception range. Stone can also peek through keyholes (the radar modifies itself to what he can 'see'), squat down and shuffle about like a shy Cossack dancer, don a disguise or dab on that night-friendly boot-polish (in front of a mirror), as well as chuck noisy distractions around to shift stubborn guards.

Although Stone's casual canter is a little constipated, he moves smoothly enough—and the free-roaming camera on the right thumbstick is vital. There's the usual trouble with camera angles (particularly during tight hiding moments), but it's quickly fixed with a light analogue jiggle. Generally, the excellent environments are soiled by snappy character models—although the stern Germans are clearly played for laughs.

Conversations with fellow inmates are stiff affairs, mostly used to advance the missions, and the high reception factor is soothed by some surprisingly professional-sounding acting (these guys have actually heard of inflection).

The game centres on routine, so it's crucial to get a fix on the guards' behaviour patterns. The most entertaining way to do this is the old technique of needless naughtiness—to test the boundaries and see how far you can go. Best of all—dare to be absent at Roll Call and marvel at the



"One of these guards is doing their own thing, one of these guards isn't the same." Captain Stone kills time by playing the *Sesame Street* game.

guards' efficiency as they conduct a ruthless camp-wide search, slowly and scientifically zooming in as you haplessly cower behind a pile of crates. You'll also be busted for wandering around with illegal, non-concealable items. So why not try a saunter around the exercise yard with a crowbar and engage in a

WHY NOT ENGAGE IN A COMEDY CHASE AROUND A TABLE, CROWBAR IN HAND?

comedy chase around a nearby table? Until someone spoils the sport by shooting you in the head, that is.

There are five overall missions—all big, none easy. Most sub-missions can only be completed at certain times of day, and instead of forcing you to wander around aimlessly running out the clock until action time, there's a timeskip option which zips game-time forwards to the desired chunk of the camp routine. This is also a factor with the Save option—either have a timeskip 'sleep' and save the game, or just continue and go for a quicker finish to the mission. Later, the plot thickens considerably. As Stone is transferred to bigger, higher security camps, he sniffs out a grand Nazi plot which leads the action through reasonable adaptations of the likes of *Stalag Luft* and *Colditz*.

POW is an unholy mix of strategy, stealth and adventure, yet never quite settles on a unique identity. Like its closest cousin, *Commandos 2*, it's also more of a PC game smuggled into the console domain. But it's deep, polished, and the routine-deviation is a great idea which could well take stealth gaming in interesting new directions. **A** Andy Lowe

BITS OF EIGHT

XBOXER OLD SKOOL

The subverts-the-routine idea is based on an old ZX Spectrum game called *Skool Daze*, in which you played a young lyle who wandered around a school (prison), passed out in hand, needing teachers (Nazis).

SNEAK AND CREEP

COMMANDOS 2 REVIEWED

WHAT'S NEW

Incredibly tough and complex World War 2 subvert-the-Nazi game. More emphasis on directing a team of experts, than solving it all yourself.

SPLINTER CELL COMING SOON

From the mind of wire-thriller king Tom Clancy, a stealth-based action game which swaps Nazis for terrorists. Only you don't avoid them. You kill them. (Wee-wee-wee)

RATED

Graphics **1000000**

Sweet backgrounds and effects; wax-dummy characters

Accessibility **1000000**

Needs a little trial and-error fumbling before everything clicks

PRISONER OF WAR

Gameplay **1000000**

Slow, strategic and open-ended. No senseless violence, though

Depth **1000000**

Plenty of ways to complete missions, lots of extras to unlock

7

GAMER VERDICT

High on heart-rate-hiking tension, but lacking in thrills.

Reviewer's hi-score: I wriggled my way out of the first holding camp without being arrested once—and unlocked a special secret for me troubles.

PRISONER OF WAR

TIME FOR TIFFIN

Regime, discipline, punctuality... The camp is a precise machine of brutal efficiency, often aided by excessive shouting (and some shooting).



1 EVENING MEAL



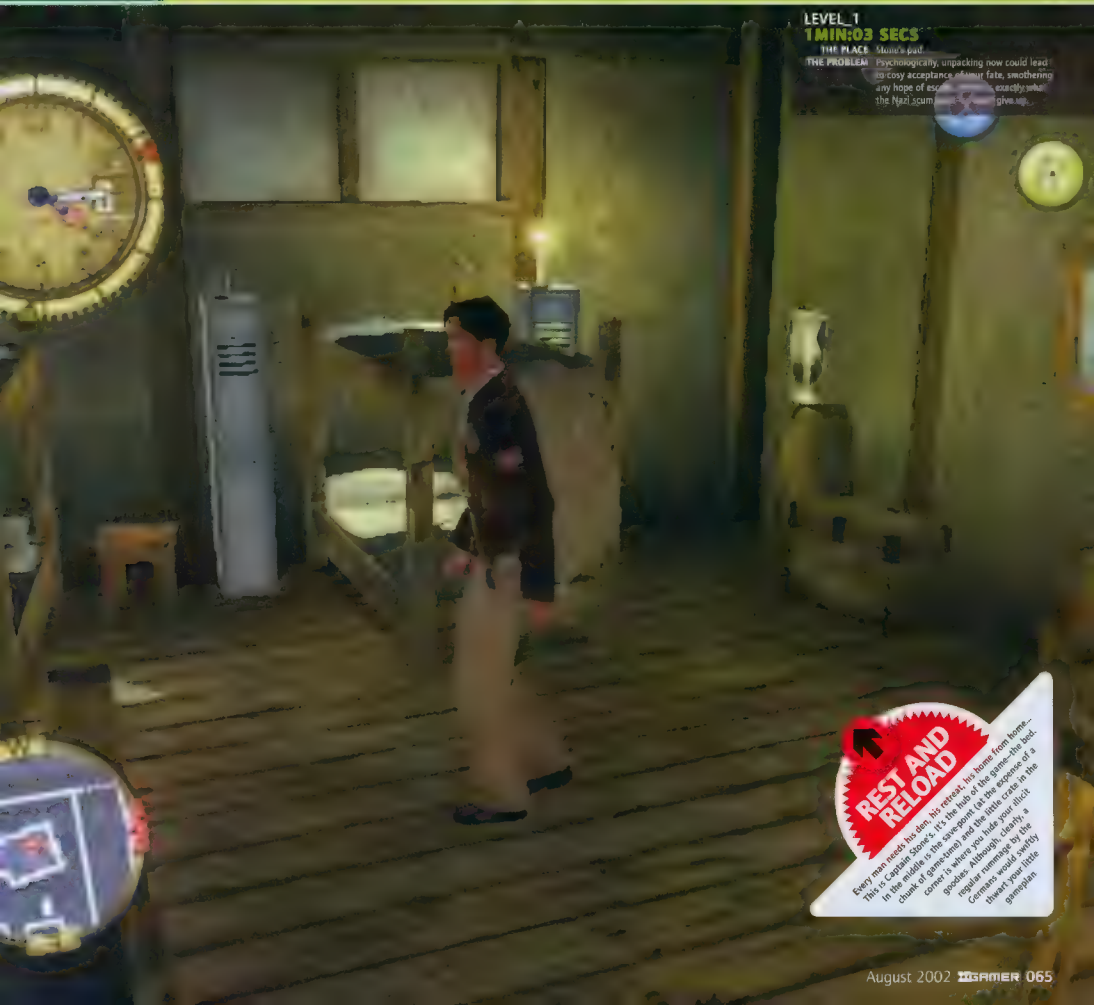
2 ROLL CALL



3 MORNING EXERCISE



4 AFTERNOON FREE TIME



LEVEL_1
1MIN:03 SECS

THE PLACE Mom's pad
THE PROBLEM Psychologically, unpacking now could lead to cosy acceptance of your fate, smothering any hope of escape from the Nazi scam

REST AND RELOAD

Every man needs his den, his retreat, his home from home. This is Captain Stone's. It's the hub of the game: the bastion in the middle is the support (or the expense) of a chunk of game time, and the little crate in the corner is where you hide your trick goodies. Although, clearly, a regular rummage by the Gammas would swamp the little den with your little gameplan.



Ultimate Racing Technology



RACING HAS EVOLVED
WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR TECHNOLOGY TO CATCH UP

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THQ

PC
 CD
 ROM
 WINDOWS
 XBOX

XBOX



Step up to the plate and take a gander at these major league visuals. Only on Xbox baby



The action is commented by Bob Costas and Harold Reynolds, renowned US broadcasters.



All the authentic major league baseball stadiums have been recreated.

TRIPLE PLAY 2002

IMPORT ONLY

Tough to play and a dream to watch—at last, someone's got it right...

On sale (US)
Now
On sale (UK)
Never

game

US price \$49.99

UK import price

£53.99

Genre Baseball

Players 1-2

Supports

Memory unit

Version NTSC

Movies

www.ea.com/espoo
rs/platforms/gam
es/tripleplay
2002/home.jsp

company

Developer Pandemic Studios

Publisher Electronic Arts

Contact

0870 243 2435

www.ea.com



Most videogame enthusiasts will agree that EA's *Triple Play* baseball series is the weakest link in its successful chain of sports titles. Not any longer. For those who crave a more arcade-like experience, *Triple Play* 2002 has come a long way from its predecessors.

Sure, there's plenty of game modes and loads of customisation, but the first thing you'll notice while stepping up to the plate is the need to position and swing the bat in real time as the ball comes screaming down the pike. Like it or lump it, other baseball games just aren't this twitchy or difficult. Ditto for pitching—you can adjust the trajectory of the ball once it leaves the glove for the ultimate in control.

Visually speaking, it's gorgeous, with realistic player models and animations. The audio is equally impressive. We're also glad that EA spent a lot of time getting the calls to coincide well with what's happening on-screen, and with little repetition.

Overall, fans of America's national sport who prefer arcade-style play over a dry sim will undoubtedly prefer this over any other baseball game on Xbox. **X** Marc Saltzman

RATED **TRIPLE PLAY VERDICT**

EA hits a home run—but not a grand slam—with its latest offering. The best arcade-like baseball experience on the Xbox.

8

IMPORT CHANNEL



Early adopters, Nipponophiles, retrofreaks... Welcome to the world of those who don't—or won't—buy homegrown

You've probably heard about importing or you know somebody who's done it, so what's it all about? And what do you need to get started? Be warned, it's no small step to take...

WHAT YOU NEED

Have you got the set-up to run a Japanese or US console? Unless you're planning to blow it up, you'll need a reliable stepdown transformer to provide the power supply of 110V at a decent wattage (200-300 watts).

Then, to get a picture, you'll need a TV that accommodates an NTSC signal, specifically 'nice' NTSC 3.58 (not bad NTSC 4.43). Check the manual, not just the sockets. Does it support composite video, S-Video, SCART or component RGB? True RGB SCART cables are available for Xbox and can arguably deliver a better picture than the lead that comes with it.

WHERE TO BUY

You'll find grey importers advertising in the classified sections of games magazines, or you can try searching online. But most transactions will be done by phone or Net. Look out for recommendations from previous customers and ask in games forums for their track record.

HOW TO BUY

Some UK importers have a habit of charging more than others. But with a UK importer you can check to see if they have the goods in stock. Foreign exporters can take a long time to deliver to the UK.

WHY IMPORT?

Not all games get a simultaneous release, and US Europeans are usually the ones who are made to wait. Sometimes forever. A few US and Japanese titles never get released here at all.

The problem with buying games on import is compatibility. Xbox game code contains a territorial lock-out dividing the world into NTSC (USA), NTSC-J (Japan) and PAL regions (the rest of the world).

WHAT MAKES THE WORLD GO AROUND

There is no such thing as a manufacturer's warranty when you import. If something goes wrong, then there's little you can do about it. This is not a hobby to get into unless you can afford it, and any advantage of shopping outside rip-off Blighty will be countered by shipping, import tax and the Spong Levy (a special mark-up thrown in for early adopters).

WAKARIMASU KA?

Every importer can tell you of a customer who bought a Japanese game and was shocked to find they couldn't understand a word of it. **X**

ENTRY DENIED USA & JAPAN RELEASE ONLY	
STAR WARS STARFIGHTER Blatant PS2 conversion	
WORLD SERIES BASEBALL Sega go batty	
MLS EXTRA TIME 2002 American for ISS 2	
OUTLAW GOLF Everybody's Golf on Xbox	
MYST III: EXILE No game is an island	
PUCHI COPTER Remote control fun	
SHIKIGAMI NO SHIRO 8/10 2D shoot-'em-up	
BISTRO CUPID Cook food and pull ladies	

WELCOME TO THE UK	
MORROWING ELDER SCROLLS RPG	AUG
SPLASHDOWN Jetski game makes waves	SEP
GRAVITY GAMES BMX Midway peddle sports	SEP
PHANTOM CRASH Genki's giant robot wars	SEP
WWF RAW Raw is in unfinished	SEP
SILENT HILL 2 Classic psycho-terror	OCT
STEEL BATTALION A grand folly	DEC
TOCA RACE DRIVER Held back by evil Sony	DEC

HI-SCORE FILES

The cut-it-out-and-weep guide to this month's meagre game harvest.



WIN!

If you consistently get better scores than we do and think our decisions are better than ours, please send us your proof (see left) to win@xgame.com and watch us award you a cash prize!

★ ENTER THE HALL OF FAME!

Getting into the Hall Of Fame is easy. Step one: peruse the scores on the left (not the peripheral ones, dippy). Step two: Laugh out loud. For ages. Step three: Get down to proving that you can beat our scores to a pulp. Step four: record your efforts and send it in. See? Easy.

In every issue we'll print the best hi-scores, times and skill feats we've racked up while reviewing this month's big games. We want you to match and, if possible, grind our efforts into the dirt. Then every month, we will print your best performances in our special Hall Of Fame section. Only then will you see how you rank versus the rest of the world—including XGamer's finest—as we applaud the best players of the month.

★ HOW TO ENTER

Survey the Reviewer Hi-Scores table on the left (and the tables we printed in XGamer 01, 02, 03, 04 and 05). Decide which score and XGamer ego is ripe for the topping. Play your game to death until you notch up a rival-crushing performance. Record your feat on video or via a photograph (see 'Evidence Gathering' on the left of the page for details on how to do this), fill in the Hall Of Fame entry ticket, then send the whole lot off to our panel of judges and await your imminent immortalisation in the next issue.

And you don't just have to beat the trials we set. If you spot a really good challenge in a game then slap that glove in our faces, describe it in sufficient detail to get us excited by the prospect and we'll throw it open to the world. Then we'll print the results, oh yes.

★ THEM RULES

You may find this hard to believe, but some people out there are prepared to fib in order to win free gear. Yup. Yup. Then they try to fool us with cheats, incredibly failing to realise that we talk to game developers every day, would have sat through said cheats being demonstrated, and could thus spot them a mile off.

That's why we ask for clear, unambiguous photographic or video evidence of your accomplishments. Send your evidence to us along with the ticket below to gain admittance into the Hall Of Fame. Remember you can enter as many scores for as many games as you like, but only the best will be printed. Our decision is final, absolute, unflinching and just.

Evidence gathering

PHOTO EVIDENCE

Point your camera at the screen and whiff! For best results, switch off the flash, draw the curtain, sit at one a foot (in, e.g. 200 or 400 ASA).

VIDEO EVIDENCE

1 Take the lead that connects your Xbox to your TV and plug it into the 'Signal In' socket on the back. If you VCR

2 Connect the 'Signal Out' to plug your video to your TV and turn both on.

3 Switch your TV to the video channel and watch on video. Xbox

4 If not a spare channel on the video's tuning mechanism, and box for the Xbox signal. Save the setting.

5 Comp the challenge, making sure you're in the right screen.

6 Pop in a tape and press 'Rec' of the video button after five seconds or so.

7 For a final challenge, capture the entire feat on video as evidence.

8 Record the tape. This is important.

9 Stick your scores, times on the front of the video before you send it in.

Score setting

Our mum, one of our reviewers but do you? Have your fun by writing or emailing your reviews and opinions to Let's Settle This, XGamer, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW.

XCRATED

GAME	SCORE	PAGE
TRIPLE PLAY 2002	5/10	67
PRISONER OF WAR	7/10	62
SLAM TENNIS	7/10	61
BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER	5/10	54
LEGENDS OF WRESTLING	5/10	58
HUNTER THE RECKONING	3/10	50
GAME	SCORE	PAGE
PS2-XBOX CONVERTER	5/10	75
JAPANESE XBOX CONTROLLER	5/10	74
S-CONTROLLER	5/10	75
MAD CATZ CONTROLLER PAD PRO	7/10	75
POWER PAD PRO	5/10	75

REVIEWER HI-SCORES

GAME	SCORE	REVIEWER
LEGENDS OF WRESTLING	45% POPULARITY AT BOSTON	DAV
HUNTER THE RECKONING	45 MINS SPENT LAUGHING AT GAME	DAV
SLAM TENNIS	MANAGED 12 ACES IN A SET	JIM
PRISONER OF WAR	WAGGLED OUT OF FIRST HOLDING CAMP WITHOUT BEING ARRESTED AND UNLOCKED A SECRET	ANDY
NUMBER OF EMPTY SEATS AT THE WORLD CUP	2,350,067	FIFA

© XGamer 2002

HALL OF FAME ENTRY TICKET

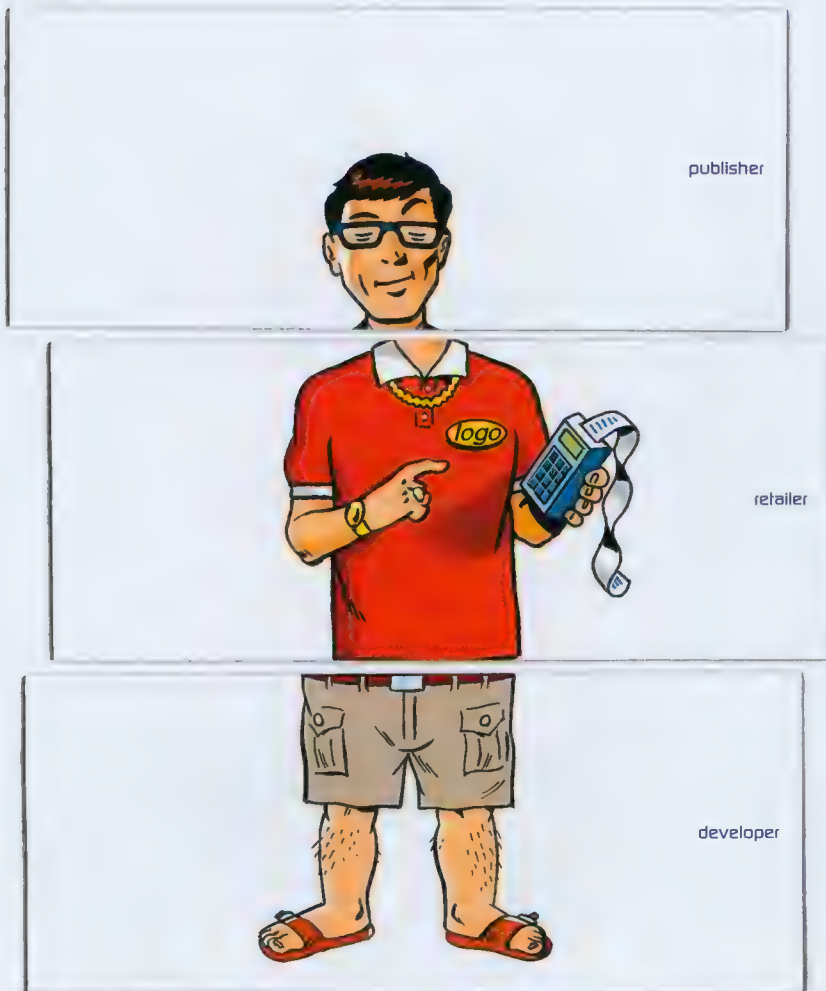
NAME

ADDRESS

GAME FEATS

Send this form (or a photocopy) along with proof of achievement to Hall Of Fame, XGamer, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW. Label your evidence with your name and score. Enclose SAE for return.

where games mean business



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As Europe's premier interactive entertainment expo, ECTS is where games are discovered, sold, reviewed, distributed, promoted and played. It's the biggest event of its kind in Europe combining a trade only hall with separate consumer area. If you're serious about games, then you have to be a player at ECTS.

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CAUTION

ALWAYS

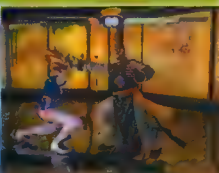
COMPLAINTS

BLOOD & GORE

CAUTION (HMM)

DEAD OR ALIVE 3

BUY!

DRAGON'S LAIR II:
TIMEWARP

IMPORT ONLY

0/10 "Take a dump and stick it in your mouth, that's *Dragon's Lair II* (only you'd still have E40 to buy some mouthwash!)"
Interactive movie □ Digital Leisure □ Review XGamer 05ESPN INTERNATIONAL
WINTER SPORTS 20022/10 "Only slightly less tedious than watching a granite block sliding at knuckle-bitingly slow speed along a sheet of ice."
Winter Olympics □ Konami □ Review XGamer 03ESPN WINTER X GAMES
SNOWBOARDING 20024/10 "Frustrating in the extreme. There's no need to subject yourself to this when the likes of *Amped* grace the shelves."
Snowboarding □ Konami □ Review XGamer 04

F1 2002

6/10 "The usual Formula One 'game'—but on the Xbox."
Racing □ EA □ Review XGamer 03 □ Tips XG 03—cheat book

FIFA WORLD CUP, 2002

6/10 "Quite a spectacle, but the shallow gameplay is unfulfilling."
Football □ Electronic Arts □ Review XGamer 02 □ Tips XG 04—tip; XG 05—guide

FUZION FRENZY

6/10 "Stacks of games in one and fun in bursts, but lacks the invention or character to hold your attention for long."
Mini-game compendium □ Microsoft □ Review XGamer 01 □ Tips XG 01—cheat; XG 03—cheat book

GAUNTLET: DARK LEGACY

2/10 "*Gauntlet: Dark Legacy* is duller than a blow to the head with a frozen turkey. And just as painful."
Action adventure □ Midway □ Review XGamer 04 □ Tips XG 05—tips bible

GENMA ONIMUSHA

8/10 "Brutal, compelling and shockingly fun. Shame it's over so quickly."
Samurai horror □ Capcom □ Review XGamer 04 □ Tips XG 05—tips bible

GUN METAL

5/10 "A entirely average shooter that's buried some good ideas in a sludge of misfiring mediocrity."
Shoot-'em-up □ Rage □ Review XGamer 05

GUN VALKYRIE

6/10 "It starts out feeling like *The Perfect Game*—then falls from grace."
Shoot-'em-up □ Sega □ Review XGamer 03 □ Tips XG 04—tip; XG 05—tips bible

HALO

BUY!



ISS2

7/10 "Not stunning but certainly the best Xbox football game so far."
Football □ Konami □ Review XGamer 04 □ Tips XG 05—guide and cheatsJAMES BOND 007
IN... AGENT UNDER FIRE6/10 "Very Bondesque, but you won't be attempting re-entry."
First-person shooter □ Electronic Arts □ Review XGamer 04JET SET RADIO
FUTURE

BUY!

KABUKI WARRIORS
UNSPORT ONLY3/10 "Tedious scrapper that raises not a blip on the heart monitor. Do not attempt to play this at home."
Beat-'em-up □ Crave □ Review XGamer 01 □ Tips XG 03—cheat book; XG 05—tips bible

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002

6/10 "It might please the mainstream, but *Knockout Kings* will certainly leave fans of the series a touch cold."
Boxing □ Electronic Arts □ Review XGamer 02

MAD DASH RACING

6/10 "Stick-as-you-like speed thrills but comedy bananas and a flatulent warthog called Chops do not a lasting race game make."
Foot-based comedy racer □ Eidos □ Review XGamer 02 □ Tips XG 03—cheat book

MADDEN NFL 2002

IMPORT ONLY

8/10 "If you have time to invest, *Madden's* depth and tactical nous make it the best American football game available on Xbox."
American football □ Electronic Arts □ Review XGamer 01 □ Tips XG 03—cheat book

MAX PAYNE

BUY!

9/10 "Brutal, brooding and impossible to put down. Buy it. Play it. Love it."
Third-person shooter □ Take 2 □ Review XGamer 02 □ Tips XG 02—tip; XG 03—playing guide; XG 04—tips bookMIKE TYSON
HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING7/10 "A fun 'n' frantic slugger without the stamina to keep it off the ropes."
Beat-'em-up □ Codemasters □ Review XGamer 05

MOTO GP URT

8/10 "The best bike racing game around, perfect for novices and pros alike"
 □Motorbike racing □THQ □Review XGamer 05

MX2002

4/10 "An arcade experience, but it lacks any of the depth, finesse and audio-visual splendour that Xbox gamers demand"
 □Moto X □THQ □Review XGamer 04

NASCAR HEAT 2002

(IMPORT ONLY)

8/10 "A bit too much like racing on a giant roundabout, but otherwise a decent upstanding member of the racing community"
 □Racing □Infogrames □Review XGamer 03 □Tips XG 03—cheat book

NASCAR THUNDER 2002

(IMPORT ONLY)

7/10 "Not Xbox's finest racer—*RalliSport Challenge* has that honour—but still more fun than a southern-fried can of whoop-ass"
 □Racing □Electronic Arts □Review XGamer 03 □Tips XG 03—cheat book

NBA 2K2

(IMPORT ONLY)

8/10 "NBA Live 2002 has a more established name and *NBA Inside Drive* may be prettier, but *NBA 2K2* is the best"
 □Basketball □Sega □Review XGamer 05

NBA INSIDE DRIVE 2002

8/10 "Everything you'd ever want in a basketball game: solid AI, ample dunks, controllable defenders and properly arcing jump shots"
 □Basketball □Microsoft □Review XGamer 03 □Tips XG 03—cheat book

NBA LIVE 2002

2/10 "Not even NBA fans will find any joy in this game. EA should have spent more money on the game instead of the licence."
 □Basketball □Electronic Arts □Review XGamer 01 □Tips XG 05—tips bible

NEW LEGENDS

3/10 "New Legends? Old Dog ends more like. If this is the future of fighting games, I'm taking up macramé"
 □Third-person slash-'em-up □THQ □Review XGamer 05

NEZMIX

(IMPORT ONLY)

3/10 "A charming idea gets caught in linearity and repetition. In essence—nice graphics, shame about the game."
 □Arcade adventure □Microsoft □Review XGamer 03

NFL 2K2

(IMPORT ONLY)

7/10 "The easiest of the three American football titles to pick up, yet *NFL 2K2* is the most frustrating to master. And the name is daft."
 □American football □Sega □Review XGamer 02

NFL BLITZ 20-02

(IMPORT ONLY)

8/10 "Still the best NFL game to go for if you're not an American football fan—but just fancy hitting a few big blokes."
 □American football □Midway □Review XGamer 03

NFL FEVER 2002

(IMPORT ONLY)

7/10 "Got lots of friends to play with? *NFL Fever* is easier to pick up and enjoy than *Madden*"
 □American football □Microsoft □Review XGamer 01 □Tips XG 03—cheat book

NHL 2002

8/10 "Same high-speed gameplay that's graced the series since the Mega Drive days, but PS2-flavour graphics keep it this side of superb"
 □Ice hockey □Electronic Arts □Review XGamer 01 □Tips XG 03—cheat book

NHL HITZ 20-02

6/10 "In terms of replicating ice hockey this is impressive. But, as an experience, *NHL Hitz* leaves you feeling strangely unfulfilled"
 □Ice hockey □Midway □Review XGamer 02 □Tips XG 03—cheat book; XG 05—tips bible

NIGHTCASTER

(IMPORT ONLY)

6/10 "Decent enough. Incurable fantasy fans would be advised to try it. A more engaging storyline would have made it a seven out of ten"
 □Arcade adventure □Microsoft □Review XGamer 02 □Tips XG 03—cheat book

ODD WORLD: MUNCH'S ODDYSSEY

7/10 "Good-natured characterful puzzling, but it may repeat on you."
 □Arcade adventure □Microsoft □Review XGamer 01 □Tips XG 03—cheat book; XG 03—tip, XG 04—tips book

OFF ROAD: WIDE OPEN

1/10 "Putting this into your Xbox would be more disrespectful than trying to ram raid Westminster Abbey in a Lada."
 □Off road racer □Infogrames □Review XGamer 02 □Tips XG 03—cheat book

PIRATES: LEGEND OF BLACK KAT

5/10 "A fantastically good-looking piece of software, with an utterly standard game attached. Classic software piracy"
 □Adventure □Electronic Arts □Review XGamer 04

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

BUY!



RALLISPORT CHALLENGE

8/10 "Despite the unofficial vibe, it holds its own. *Colin McRae 3*—it's your move."
 □Rallying □Microsoft □Review XGamer 02

RED CARD

7/10 "Lack of depth means it won't last the full season but it's bloody good fun nonetheless."
 □Football □Midway □Review XGamer 05

SHIKIGAMI NO SHIRO

(IMPORT ONLY)

8/10 "Fast, fun, and pixel-perfect, proving that a lack of complexity doesn't stop a game from being great."
 □Shoot-'em-up □Media Works □Review XGamer 05

SHREK

4/10 "Boring and unrewarding platform pokery. Those without standards might like it. The rest... what do you reckon?"
 □Platform □TDK □Review XGamer 02 □Tips XG 03—cheat book

SILENT HILL: RESTLESS DREAMS

(IMPORT ONLY)

8/10 "Scary. Compelling. Challenging. Almost as good as the original."
 □Survival horror □Konami □Review XGamer 01 □Tips XG 01—tip, XG 02—tip, XG 03—cheat book, XG 05—tips bible

SIMPSON'S ROAD RAGE, THE

4/10 "Take out *The Simpsons* and you've got a hollow mockery of a game. Wrapped in a vest."
 □Arcade driving □Electronic Arts □Review XGamer 01 □Tips XG 02—cheat, XG 03—cheat book, XG 05—tips bible

SMASHING DRIVE

(IMPORT ONLY)

3/10 "This simplistic, repetitive driving game is Namco's first Xbox game—let's hope they do better with the next one."
 □Racing □Namco □Review XGamer 05

SPIDER-MAN

6/10 "A lazy average adaption. This isn't what you bought an Xbox for."
 □Action-adventure □Activision □Review XGamer 05 □Tips XG 05—cheat and tip

IGNAMER RECOMMENDS

Personal favourites

STEEL DRUMS AND FIRE GAMES

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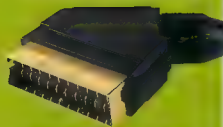
Want to read all the above reviews in full? Ring our back issues hotline to snap up the few issues we've got knocking around our warehouse, but hurry—they're going fast!

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GET THE
BEST TV
CONNECTION

With differing build qualities, some SVideo connections are actually better than some RGB SCART sockets. Likewise, some SCART connections are really just SCART-shaped composite sockets. If in doubt, check your TV's manual.

RGB SCART



S-VIDEO

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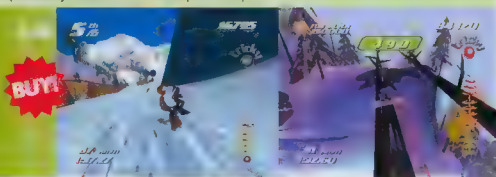
Not all tellys are created equal. With differing build qualities, some SVideo connections are actually better than some RGB SCART sockets. Likewise, some SCART connections are really just SCART-shaped composite sockets. If in doubt, check your TV's manual.

GAME (NAME)

SPYHUNTER

7/10 "You'll greedily snort it up but the ensuing fun is short-lived."
 Shoot-'em-up ☐ Midway ☐ Review XGamer 04 ☐ Tips XG 05—tip

55X TRICKY

STAR WARS:
JEDI STARFIGHTER

7/10 "Decent shoot-'em-up but shorter life expectancy than a Stormtrooper"
 Shoot-'em-up ☐ LucasArts ☐ Review XGamer 04

STAR WARS: OBI-WAN

5/10 "Has its moments, but then so did *The Phantom Menace*"
 Action adventure ☐ LucasArts ☐ Review XGamer 02 ☐ Tips XG 03—cheat book, XG 05—tips bible

STAR WARS:
STARFIGHTER S.E.

6/10 "An uninspired port of an overrated PS2 game. Fun while it lasts."
 Dogfighting shoot-'em-up ☐ LucasArts ☐ Review XGamer 01 ☐ Tips XG 03—cheat book

TD OVERDRIVE

2/10 "A heap of a racer, made with all the love and effort that a supermarket trolley boy shows for his four-wheeled charges"
 Street racer ☐ Infogrames ☐ Review XGamer 04

TONY HAWK'S
PRO SKATER 2X

7/10 "Tony looks great on the box, but 2x is a step backwards for Hawk's veterans. Hang on for *Tony Hawk's 3*"
 Skateboarding ☐ Activision ☐ Review XGamer 01 ☐ Tips XG 03—cheat book

TONY HAWK'S
PRO SKATER 3

8/10 "Criminally addictive, relentless thrills but not truly radical"
 Skateboarding ☐ Activision ☐ Review XGamer 02 ☐ Tips XG 03—cheat book, XG 03/04—level guide; XG 05—tips bible

TRANSWORLD SURF

7/10 "Bold, fun and well worth a gander. Nice to see an extreme sports game without a Roman numeral. Yet"
 Surfing ☐ Infogrames ☐ Review XGamer 02 ☐ Tips XG 03—cheat book

UFC: TAPOUT

3/10 "Messy, vacuous and oddly non-violent fighting that's as likely to gnp you as Giant Haystacks is of making a career comeback"
 Beat-'em-up ☐ Ubi Soft ☐ Review XGamer 03 ☐ Tips XG 03—cheat book

WRECKLESS:
THE YAKUZA MISSIONS

6/10 "A fantastic demo of the Xbox graphics processor but not much else"
 Driving ☐ Activision ☐ Review XGamer 02 ☐ Tips XG 03—cheat book, XG 05—tips bible

WWF RAW

5/10 "Wrestling—as portrayed by people who don't watch wrestling much"
 Wrestling ☐ THQ ☐ Review XGamer 03 ☐ Tips XG 03—cheat book

GAME ON COMPO

Win tickets to the only museum exhibit you'll ever want to see...



If you know nothing about Game On, flip to page 120, read our insider special then return here. Read it? Good stuff. We've teamed up with the organisers to give you the chance to be at the game extravaganza. Two

of you will win ten (ten!) free tickets so even the most matronly of you should still have a ticket spare to invite your favourite Auntie. You'll also win two passes to see ALL of the films shown throughout the entire game-related movie season, a Game On book, poster and Joystick Juniors T-shirt. Two runners up will also pocket two free tickets and a poster. To stand a chance, all you've got to do is prove you know more about Game Oning than your mum by answering

Which game is the oldest?

- 1 50K Tetris
 2 Pong
 3 Space Invaders

Bang your answer on a postcard and send it to...

Game On Compo,
 XGamer Magazine,
 30 Monmouth St,
 Bath
 BA1 2BW

Or email xgamergames@uk.comet.co.uk Closing date is 26/07/02
 We'll be picking the winners out from the most random hat in town
 Good luck! Compo rules on page 126

barbican art

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GAME ON VOUCHER

The lovely people at the Barbican like us so much that not only are they giving away tickets (see left), they're offering all XGamer readers the supermarket-style offer of three for two tickets to the Game On exhibition. We toddled down to the Barbican ourselves only to discover Game On is well worth a look. So all you've got to do to claim those golden tickets is ring 020 7638 8891 and quote XGAM. Easy. Now just find two mates...



tackle

It's a tiny pad special. Pygmy controllers from afar come to challenge our native varieties. Oh, the excitement...

JAPANESE XBOX CONTROLLER

- From Microsoft
- Price £45
- On sale Now
- Contact Various importers

OVERVIEW

The diminutive pad developed by Microsoft for the Japanese market. Its defining features are a semi-transparent casing, and relocation of the smaller buttons

ERGONOMICS

Very comfortable. The only downside is that trying to hit or buttons requires severe bendature of the thumb. Also, your fingers tend to overhang the triggers

CONTROLS

Good and solid. The triggers are nicely sensitive, the analogue sticks feel right, and the fire buttons hurt less than the standard pad. The D-pad is slightly better too, but and are recessed too far for proper contact

THE GAMEPLAY TEST

The controls don't feel too dissimilar to the standard pad, but the overall size and button placement are the main areas of contention. Nice solid rumble function, though, and a good D-pad for beat-'em-ups.

APPROVED

RATED A great replacement pad, which has both pros and cons. If anything, though, this model is perhaps just a shade too small for our manly hands.

XGAMER RECOMMENDS

BEST UNOFFICIAL PAD ADVANCED CONTROLLER

8/10, XGAMER 02 £19.99

From Joytech
On sale Now
Contact 0800
389 9647



The next best thing to the offic a-pad, and five n'cker cheaper. A reassuringly well bu lt, qua lity controller.

BEST JOYSTICK ARCADE STICK

9/10, XGAMER 03 £29.99

From Gamester
On sale Now
Contact 01922 503 133

No analogue stick functions maybe, but this st ck' l see you, right for loads of games—most notably *Dead Or Alive 3*



BEST WHEEL 360 MODENA

6/10, XGAMER 02 £44.99

From Thrustmaster
On sale Now
Contact 01268 531 222

Ain't no such thing as a cheap steering wheel. If you can't live without one, plump for the Modena. It's the best. Cheaper alternatives just can't cut it.



BEST GADGET X JOYBOX CONVERTER

9/10, XGAMER 03 £44.99

From Importers: £5
On sale Now
Contact:
www.xbox-onl ne
net/flash/xboxj
oybox.html or
www.another
wor d.co.uk



A fantastic gadget that lets you plug PS2 joypads in to your Xbox. A lot cheaper than buying new pads or on import only

8



AMERICAN XBOX S-CONTROLLER

From Microsoft Price £45
On sale Now Contact Various importers

OVERVIEW

Almost identical to the Japanese model, apart from the solid black casing, and the rather unpleasant green badging. Like the oriental model, the lead is about a foot shorter than the standard pad's. Sneaky

ERGONOMICS

Exactly the same as the Japanese pad, with the same button placement. If anything, the perfect size would be halfway between the standard controller and this one

CONTROLS

No discernible difference between this and the Japanese model! In all likelihood, they're made from the exact same components, in the same Malaysian factory

THE GAMEPLAY TEST

Again, rock solid and accurate. It only falls short in those games that rely on the and buttons (unfortunately, that's Halo and DOA3—the two biggest games on the system...)

RATED Equally as good as the Japanese model but there's no need to rush out and replace your standard pad **8**



MAD CATZ CONTROL PAD PRO

From Mad Catz Price £19.99
On sale Now Contact www.madcatz.com

OVERVIEW

Slightly smaller than the standard pad, and with semi-transparent casing. The handles have large, ribbed rubber insets, for the more damp-palmed out there, and a programmable macro function

ERGONOMICS

The soe is almost bang-on, but then they go and spoil it with those 'ribbed for your pleasure' gnps, which are just a bit too nbby for our liking. The button layout feels pretty familiar

CONTROLS

The macro programming mode lets you allocate button sequences to the , , and buttons—and it works well too (though with DOA3 you'll need to add 'time' between stored button presses with the button) The wonky D-pad works better than it feels

THE GAMEPLAY TEST

No real complaints in terms of control, although the button is just a teensy bit too far away for our liking, and after a while those stupid rubber gnps actually start to make your palms ache

RATED Very nearly a great pad. The programmable macro function is good, and you might like the rubbery bits more than we did **7**



MAGIC BUTTON
Macro buttons let you program your pad so that a single movement of a button can be changed to one button. It's a cheat, but a damn fine one.

POWERPAD PRO

From Interact Price £19.99
On sale Now Contact www.interact-acc.com

OVERVIEW

Slightly over-designed for our tastes. The two handles are clad in rubber and it features a programmable macro function, plus adjustable vibration. Also available in green

ERGONOMICS

Feels solid in the hands, and has wider triggers which are really comfy. Only the and buttons are tricky to reach. The and buttons are painfully small

CONTROLS

The analogue sticks are too loose, and the firing action lacks that nice micro-switched feedback. But the biggest culprit is the D-pad which is just awful—it's stodgy and sounds like a two-stroke moped going up a hill

THE GAMEPLAY TEST

Halo felt a little vague thanks to those spongy analogue sticks, but the D-pad proved completely unpredictable in DOA3. Also, the vibration makes a really nasty whining sound

RATED Flawed. Shame, really—it fits nicely in the hands and has some smart features. Overall, though, we'd rather do without the crap D-pad and arthritic rumbling **5**

PS2-XBOX CONVERTER

APPROVED

From Another World Price From £6 to £25
On sale Now Contact 01782 271750

If the thought of dropping 20 smackers on yet another joy pad sends you into fits of rage, you might consider one of the many PS2-to-Xbox converters, which plug into the Xbox controller ports, and let you use any PlayStation 2 Dualshock pads you might have lying around

There are loads of devices on offer, going by names like XBCConverter, Super Joybox Converter, Dreambox Converter and X-Connection. They're only available on import and prices vary, so shop around. Look in the classifieds for UK importers

We tried the XBCConverter at a cost of £25 from www.anotherworld.co.uk and, whaddya know... it really works. The and buttons are mapped to the L2 and R2 triggers (which in many respects is better than the official pad, and is great for DOA3), but the vibration works and the Dualshock 2 is a comfortable and robust controller

RATED Brilliant. If you like the PlayStation 2 pad, pick up a couple of these and save yourself some cash—and drawer space. Just watch how much you're spending on them **9**



NEXT MONTH > TWO TURNABLES AND A MICRO...

Well not quite, but in XGamer 07 we put this mixed bag of new kit through its paces. three joysticks, a sound station, a steering wheel, and a 16Mb memory card... unmissable.

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gamesradar.com
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aeo

STAYING



DANGER! READ THIS OR FACE PUBLIC MOCKING

It's a long way, to Tipperary, it's a long way, to go, it's a long way to Tipperary, to the sweetest tips...

Expert tip

crash

➤ Find Crash heaven with easy button presses.

Been crashing around for ages and still only unlocked half a car? Or spanked the entire game and want a fresh challenge? All these button combinations have to be entered on the loading screen, once you have selected your level and vehicle. If the combination is entered correctly then it'll tell you in the bottom left of the screen. Bargain.

ENABLE JUMP BUTTON

➤, ←, → on D-pad and then 0

GIVE INFINITE NITROS

➤, ← on D-pad and then 0

REMOVE ALL NITROS

➤, ← on D-pad and then 0

BOT GANG UP—AI only targets human players, not each other, so perfect if you're feeling macho and want to turn yourself into a magnet

➤, ↑ on D-pad and then 0

KILL AI—Turn off AI on all cars, leaving them stationary, which means you can take extreme advantage of their engine-free state of play

➤, ← on D-pad and then 0

UNLOCK ALL—Unlock all vehicles and all levels if you're crap and can't get through the challenges like a man

➤, ↓, ←, → on D-pad and then 0



UNDER COVER

Stoody good show to everyone for sending in cheats, if we all stand together holding hands in a huge giant circle, we'll heat these games into pulp. Keep them coming in.

SECRET SERVICE

PIRATES LEGEND OF THE BLACK KAT

Invincibility for Katarina

Hold 0 + 0 and press 0, 0, click left thumbstick, press 0, click right thumbstick, press 0, click right thumbstick, press 0, 0

Invincibility for Wind Dancer

Hold 0 + 0 and press 0, 0, 0, 0, click right thumbstick, press 0, 0, click right thumbstick, press 0, click left thumbstick

Reveal buried treasure chests

Hold 0 + 0 and press 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, click left thumbstick, click right thumbstick, Green Xs will appear on the log maps showing you where they are

Reveal all treasure chests

Hold 0 + 0 and click right thumbstick, press 0, 0, click left thumbstick, press 0, 0, click left thumbstick, press 0, 0

All treasure chest keys

Hold 0 + 0 and press 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, click right thumbstick, press 0, click left thumbstick, press 0, 0, click left thumbstick

Alternate glacial gulf music:

Hold 0 + 0 and press 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, click left thumbstick, press 0, click right thumbstick, click left thumbstick

Ken Moore, Liverpool

Expert tip

crash bandicoot: the wrath of cortex

➤ Cheat your way through the cortex's wrath.

Avalanche

While riding the snowboard don't waste energy trying to smash the crates, let the avalanche do the job for you.

Arctic antics

After you've netted yourself a handy bazooka by defeating level four's boss, return to Arctic Antics. Shooting the three mammoths will net you extra lives

After you've learned the Double Jump, disrespect the mammoths by jumping on their heads. You'll get an extra life for each woolly mammoth you jump on.

Note: For the one at the end, get up on the glaciers to be able to reach

Go to the bonus platform and go through the bonus level. When you get back, jump to the right. You should hit a mammoth and get an extra life if you jumped on it. You have to jump back quickly because the mammoth vanishes

Bonzat bonsat

After the Red Gem has found itself in your bandicoot pocket, go to the Bonzat Bonsat level. Jump onto the Red Gem, then make your way to the end to find a gem and the super belly flop power.

Crash and burn

Do not try to jump the big gap. The warp zone at the end is an illusion, and you cannot get there. Instead, use the bazooka and shoot it. Do not worry if you die, because you will retain the gem

YOU WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED!

ALIVE



↓ **xpert tip**

spider-man

➔ Dress Spidey up in different, weirder clobber than his own.

Find swinging around town as the same old Spidey boring? Slap these codes in at the cheat screen (from the options menu) to swap the eight-legged one with a variety of other characters.

HERMANSCULTZ Play as The Shocker	KNUCKLES Play as thug one	REALHERO Play as police officer
SERUM Play as a scientist	STICKYRICE Play as thug two	THUGSRUS Play as thug three
GIRLNEXTDOOR Play as Mary Jane Watson	FREAKOUT Play as <i>Matrix</i> style Spider-Man	CAPTAINSTACEY Play as the helicopter pilot

For a feast of other tip-related tips, roll your eyes down this lustful list of web-related cheats.

ORGANICWEBBING Unlimited webbing	IMIARMS All levels	UNDERTHEMASK First-person mode
KOALA All fighting controls	DODGETHIS Matrix moves	CHILLOUT Supercoolant
ROMITAS Enables next level feature in game	GOESTOYOURHEAD Big head and feet	HEADEXPLODY Bonus training level



SPECIAL AGENT
David Graham has netted this month's prize for his outrageously dirty ISS2 tip. We salute you, David, for cheating above and beyond the call of duty.

CHAMP MAN!
HELP!
Losing at the world's trickiest game? Contact our footie expert:
lee.hall@futurenet.co.uk
XGamer Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW

SECRET SERVICE

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002

Easy win
After completing the game, choose teleportation as your cheat. You will have to press your special and **Q** to use it. If you are playing two-player or exhibition mode, set the match to one round. Hit your opponent a few times then keep teleporting for the rest of the round and you will win.

Give your created boxer the Body Blaster as his special move. Throw a few jabs during the match and back away. Wait for your opponent to move in and hit him with the Body Blaster. It should stun him. Hit him with it again. Continue to do this and you will knock him out in no time. This can be done in all three weight divisions and works almost all of the time. Also, if you find yourself in trouble, try the Backhand (elbow) followed by the Body Blaster. It either takes off a good amount of energy or stuns them, leaving them open for the Body Blaster. Todd Findlay, London

ISS2
Foul winnings
If you're losing the match, run about dribbling the ball and the opposition will tackle you, eight out of ten times it'll be a foul leading to them getting a yellow or red card. Do this until four of their team is sent off. The game is cancelled and you've won. David Graham, Edinburgh

XGAMER SECRET SERVICE

Discovered a sneaky cheat or tip in a game? Broken into a secret area or sabotaged the game physics? Then tell us! We'll print the coolest finds of the month and give a top prize to the best.

Name

Address

Game name

My discovery is

Send to: On XGamer's Secret Service, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.

or email: xgamer@futurenet.co.uk

JOYTECH®

The best reader tip bags a **multiplayer starter kit from Joytech** (consists of three extra pads, a system link cable and an RGB SCART cable. Nice.)



GOT TO GRIPS WITH MOTO GP? NO? TURN OVER! ➔



STAYING ALIVE

Expert tips: moto gp

moto gp

ultimate racing technology

Take corners like Foggy with our expert guide.

Like any great racing game, the slickness of *Moto GP's* handling is directly proportional to how much fun it is. And it's lots of fun. But winning races isn't simply a case of whacking your bike round corners with your fingers firmly wrapped round the accelerator. So here's our guide to getting the best from your machine, and more out of the game.

the art of cornering

Here's where it all happens. Without the ability to crank your wheels around a bend at a decent clip, you're no good to anyone. Fortunately, there are a few simple rules you can follow to make life a whole lot easier.

APPROACHING THE CORNER

As you head towards a corner, use your front brake (or front combined with rear for extra braking power). This will keep your bike stable—as long as you keep it upright. Applying your front brakes while turning is a definite no-no, as they will pretty much halve your cornering ability. Lay off them *before* you begin turning.

POSITIONING

The principle is the same for any corner: the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. And while a totally straight line is never possible through a corner, you should always aim for the most direct route possible.

As shown in the diagram on the facing page, you should set yourself up so you're approaching the corner from the outside edge. Brake on the straight, crank it into the bend so that your bike clips the apex, then power away, again heading for the outside edge. Apply the same principle to chicanes (refer to the diagram on the facing page for the optimum route).

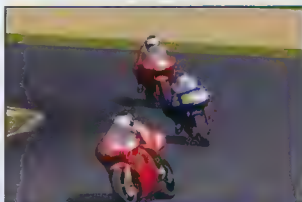
CORNER SPEED AND BRAKING

By the time you reach a corner and begin turning in, you should have scrubbed off enough speed to carry you through the bend without touching the brakes.

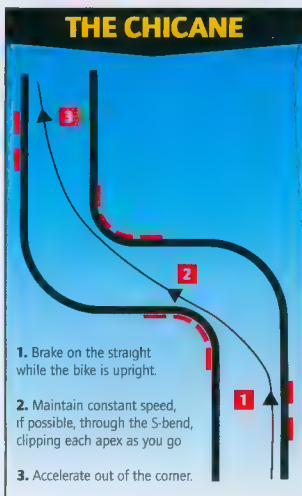
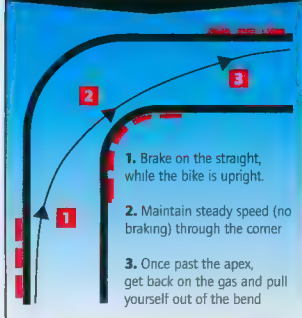
BROKE?

If you don't like the idea of two sets of brakes, you can always use the combined brake button instead. But then you won't be able to use the rear brake in corners—at least not without upsetting the bike!





THE CORNER



again. As you're travelling through the corner, try and maintain an even engine speed, so that you're not accelerating or braking, as this will affect the line you're taking. As soon as the road begins straightening up again, get on the gas and you'll find your bike pulling its way out.

STEADY
Maintaining a steady speed is crucial to clean cornering. Brake on the straight, lean at a steady speed, then accelerate on exit. That's the drill. Ultimately, though, there's no substitute for knowing the tracks.

advanced techniques

THE VANISHING POINT

The vanishing point is basically a trick of perspective. From your point of view, it's the bit where the left and right-hand sides of the road converge. On a straight road, it'll be way off in the distance; in the middle of the corner, it'll be right in front of your nose.

It isn't just a noteworthy side-effect of physics, however. The vanishing point is a useful tool for the committed racer. Basically, the further away it is, the faster you can go. As it starts drawing closer, you know there's a corner approaching—and you have to start scrubbing off speed. With practice, you can use the vanishing point to dictate how hard you brake, accelerate and corner, judging the severity of the bend by how fast the vanishing point moves and how close it is.

POWERSLIDES

Bikes aren't renowned for their ability to slide around corners while staying on the track. As soon as they do, they tend to catapult into the air and shrug off their riders—this is known as a highside. Fortunately, *Moto GP* enables you to bend the rules of physics a little.

If you find yourself flying through a corner too fast and you're heading towards the outer edge of the road, press the rear brake hard, and keep turning as sharply as possible if you push it hard enough, you can perform a little powerslide, and point your bike neatly towards the corner exit. Of course, this will never get you around the corner quickly or cleanly, but it can save you from leaving the track and hitting the dirt, where your speed will suffer an immediate and dramatic drop. Oh, and another thing: don't touch the front brakes. They'll bring the bike upright and send you barrelling off the track. **X**



STAYING ALIVE

Expert tips: halo

halo multiplayer battle tactics

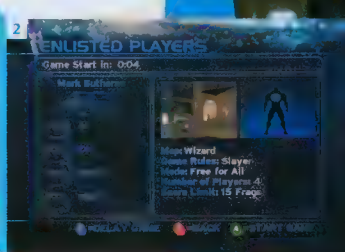
➤ *Halo*, the way *Halo* was always meant to be played—with others.

setting up

If you're going for four-way split screen, be prepared to transport everything to the house of the mate with the biggest telly and sort out closer seating. It really makes a difference.

Blame it on the shifting demographic, but for the first time in console history it doesn't seem too difficult to sort out a link-up game. All you need is another mate with an Xbox, a car, and their TV for the evening. The biggest hidden expense comes in those extra joypads for five-eight players, but every owner should have a pair and it's still worth arranging separate screens for two-on-two games. Opposite ends of a living/dining room can work better than two rooms, as you want to be able to plot quietly but still communicate (okay, taunt and mock) across the divide. Also, make sure you can set up both games on the same 50Hz speed setting with whatever video leads you're using.

And, we know it's tedious, but give everyone the chance to set up their own character profile before you start. If they borrow a joypad profile in use, *Halo* will make up a different network name for them in every game until even they don't know who they are. And that's just no good, because (a) you may shoot them by mistake and (b) carrying over kill grudges from match to match is mandatory.



SPLASH 'EM!
It's too easy to miss a moving enemy with the rocket launcher. Always aim at their feet, or the floor or wall beside them, and you'll score more kills from the unavoidable blast.

expert tips: halo

organising

It's worth repeating: talk, talk, talk to your buddies and try to know where they are at all times. The team with a plan always beats the free-for-all opportunists in the end. If you get killed, tell them who killed you, with what weapon, and where they are right now. They may be too engaged to acknowledge, but it'll sink in and may just grant them a better chance for immediate vengeance on your behalf. Two-way information is like having an extra scanner—players on the ground can call the shots for snipers and tank gunners, while snipers can warn ground troops of what's ahead.

Then go a step further, and co-ordinate. Two players on one can secure a kill. A shock troop on the ground with a sniper back-up is the standard base game arrangement. Don't be too disheartened if your buddies aren't exactly Marine material, though: there's nothing worse than a self-appointed team leader barking orders while you're having fun.



DUCK!

As well as crouching to break a fall, try doing the same after launching yourself into a running leap to hold your path through the air. You'll see what we mean in multiplayer.

expert tips: halo

boot camp

There are three stages of proficiency when grasping a multiplayer game like *Halo*.

STAGE 1 Learn the maps

Obvious but essential. If you don't know where the rocket launcher is, or you don't know that there are sniper positions in the hills of Blood Gulch, or you can't tell whether you've just teleported to blue base or red base, most of your time will be spent running about in confusion and missing all the fun. Learning the map will let you guess where your killer was sniping from and how best to remove them in the next life. When it's getting late, return to maps you all know.

STAGE 2 Learn the tricks

Fighting human players is very different to fighting Covenant, and much tougher. You have a very small window to do as much damage as possible, because a near-kill is still a no-kill if they get away and you'll be weakened by any exchange. Once you fix on a target and start winning, stay on them and don't be distracted by other enemies entering the fray. Consider bumping up your pad sensitivity as high as you can manage so that you can turn faster.

STAGE 3 Anticipate others having your knowledge

Some people are so predictable. If there's a Rocket Launcher in the middle of the level, it's a honeytrap for any sniper worth their salt. If a Warthog rolls up to your base in CTF with three players on board, they're probably planning a speedy getaway (depending on the numbers, it may also tell you that their own base is now completely undefended). And the weak link here is either a driver or an empty Warthog while the others are inside, so you could try something cleverer than just fighting it out inside the base.



STAGE 1

STAGE 2

STAGE 3



STAYING ALIVE

Expert tips: halo

game modes

Capture the flag

Before you grab the flag, always equip the weapon you'll want to have ready if you need to drop it. This is a great opportunity to surprise somebody with the Rocket Launcher, though if you're packing anything less then you should consider a quick turn to throw it wide and then back off so that your assailant has to choose between tackling you or grabbing the flag with their flank to you. If you're in the other shoes, always go for the flag—your death is more affordable than your team flag.

Oddball

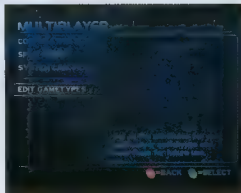
If you're being hunted down or you happen to find a nice, quiet place to hide, look down or away from landmarks—otherwise, other players can look at your part of the screen to see where you are.

Like power-ups, the Skull can be sent flying by grenades and rockets. Worth bearing in mind as a serious spoiler tactic.



Custom games

There are many preset options to keep you busy but it's worth keeping a basic Slayer option with no motion tracker. If you find that your games tend to be dominated by everyone wanting to snipe, which can be slow, disabling the scanner gives an advantage to the shock troop charge and makes players a bit jumpier about sitting with their head in a scope view.



Expert tips: halo

power-ups

Power-ups

An excellent tip here is that you may not have to run to every collectable you see. You can send the preset weapons flying with grenades or rockets, and power-ups only need to be shot at to be dislodged (especially useful on a map like Rat Race, where you can shoot down the power-ups in the tunnel's drop-holes from below, or in Prisoner and Hang 'Em High where the Rocket Launcher is on an exposed ledge).



HANG RIGHT!

Edge out of cover to the right where possible, because that's your gun arm—meaning less exposure and clearer views. Lean out to the left and that rifle or launcher muzzle may still be pointing at the wall in front of you.

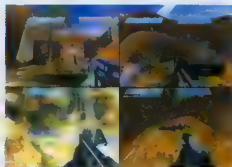
On a sociable note...

If you're welcoming newcomers to *Halo* on your Xbox, bear in mind that you're probably a bit good by now. Team up to balance things out, and kick off with a custom Rockets plus motion tracker on Hang 'Em High ("Halo does Quake") so they can get accustomed to the controls and still stand a chance of a kill. Reverse Tag is also a great handicapping option to give everyone a chance in Free For All.



Overshield

You can't tell when another player is using an Overshield, so this is the perfect power up for entering one of those you-or-me face-off duels. Encouraging one, even, as the shield degrades gradually. By the time your opponent works out that you're cheating, they'll be into their next life. If you need to get somewhere fast, an overshield will also protect you from a fair amount of falling damage. The bane of the overshield is the plasma pistol's overcharge, which will wipe the whole lot in one shot: fortunately, though, anyone overcharging the pistol might as well carry a green neon sign that says "All Snipers Are Bastards".



your buddies are doing their job and covering you en route—which makes for a superior humiliation kill. You don't get a damage multiplier for running, however, as you're bound to be running if you're holding them.

Punches and bombs

As in Campaign, far too many players get caught up in gunplay and die while holding grenades that could have turned the tables. Unless you're concerned for team members, remember that left trigger. Likewise, the melee attack is



immensely powerful in multiplayer, especially with no motion trackers—automatic kills from behind, remember—and if you happen to be running or, even better, running down from a ledge above, the conventional damage increases. Tag a melee attack on the end of a charge when your clip empties or gun overheats.

Active camouflage

This is not a true invisibility, but you can make it more effective by (a) sticking to the shadows and (b) not moving on anyone's motion tracker. You'll become visible if you fire a weapon so, unless you're hiding, think of it as a ticket to score just one easier kill and favour grenades or quick put-downs up close. Sniping in scope view won't warn you when this is wearing off.



The oddball cripple

Sneakily, both the Oddball Skull and the CTF Flag can be used as melee weapons with the **B** button. They deal superior damage, too, killing in two hits—one, if

Expert tips: halo vehicles

The AR and LAAG really come into their own as anti-vehicle weapons, surprisingly, as the whole bullet spread tends to find its target. Vehicle-flipping is the obvious job for a rocket launcher, but grenades will suffice (rolling a frag low tends to be more accurate than wild bouncing). If you have to abandon vehicle, you can use it as temporary cover.

Scorpion tank

It's very simple for gently rising ground to completely block the main gun's line of fire on a distant target you can frustratingly see easily. Your shots explode harmlessly several yards ahead. A quick trick here is to reverse the tank against a wall or boulder to lift it up at the back. If you're shelling from a distance, on the other hand, face the tank



RUSH 'EM!

When it comes down to nerve, some excellent solo players can be totally fazed by an upfront player who just keeps running around, trying to get behind and continually piling on the shots. Psych 'em out.



STAYING ALIVE

Expert tips: halo

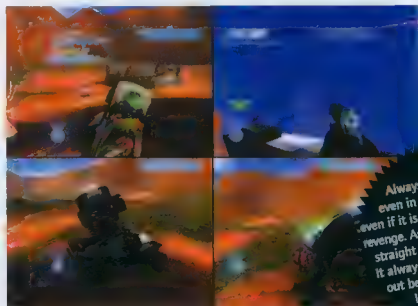
vehicles cont

➔ away from your target and turn the turret through 180° so that the driver's seat is shielded from snipers

The coaxial machine gun is okay versus other vehicles and aggressors while the next shell is loading but it's only an Assault Rifle in effect, so just use it to hold aim and keep the pressure on during the countdown

Warthog

As in co-op mode, the side seat gunner can't reload except automatically, by emptying a clip. Try to avoid an embarrassing accidental disembarking. If you're wanting to take this seat for more than transport, pack a Rocket Launcher



TACTICS!

Always have a plan, even in FFA games, and even if it is as petty as personal revenge. As soon as you die, get straight back into that plan. It always feels the timer runs out before you get in that last definite kill.

Ghost

Sheer speed makes the Ghost a great base-raiding vehicle on Blood Gulch and Sidewinder, especially for CTF. You always dismount to the right, and remembering this can save valuable seconds in reaching cover. One thing to note is that it's slightly easier to run over other players in the Ghost than you'll expect from having tried to wing-clip Covenant in Campaign, especially if you anticipate their dodging with the sideways strafe, but they'll take you with them if they have a shotgun or a plasma grenade and reflexes, and you're hideously exposed to driver-focussed sniping

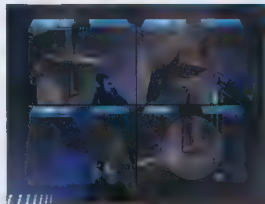


Expert tips: halo

rules & advice

Forcing range

At just ten bounding paces away, the shotgun does no more damage than the pistol and with a significantly lower rate of fire. So use the surrounding space to grant your optimum range. The shotgun owns corridor corners and tight bases, and if your opponent is backing off you can almost herd them into a corner trap. Arenas, long corridors and high ledges belong to the pistol



Higher and higher

Always look for the height advantage, as some of the maps are very tall. Compared to the guys on the ground you get a better aim, much faster grenade detonation, crouch cover and an overview of the arena. If you're in the clouds, they may not see you as they run past—but you'll see them. Even on a ledge just one storey up, you'll have the benefit of impenetrable cover for your lower body



Chasing amiably

It's hard to resist that hunting instinct and give chase when you suddenly see another player darting through a door. If a warning shot behind lets you know you're the one being hunted down in this instance, it's a perfect opportunity to leave a grenade for your pursuer. Frags are less

conspicuous but you really need to bounce them off a facing wall and slightly to one side so that they land behind you and don't trigger until you're clear. Throwing one straight ahead as you dive into a teleport can work well! Alternatively, plasma grenades dropped obviously in a doorway, corridor or teleport can deter somebody from giving chase.





Super Mario with guns

Halo wisely doesn't ask for too much of this in Campaign, but some leaping skills can really make a difference in the 3D maps of multiplayer. There are plentiful opportunities to take shortcuts by crossing from ledge to ledge or dropping down a floor. The downside is that jumping also commits you to a fairly slow and predictable arc that any player with decent aim can exploit to blow you out of the sky.

Weapons paralysis

One thing you won't have noticed in Campaign is the ability to stun other players with a barrage of hits from rapid fire weaponry. The best part of it is psychological: with the



screen flashing and joypad rattling, the victim is likely to panic and you can move to flank. If an overhear or empty clip stops you going for the kill, flick to your other weapon to keep up the sensory assault or lose a grenade—either they won't spot it or they'll panic some more.

Telefragging

Don't loiter after teleporting or hide out behind the green curtain. If somebody follows you through and you're blocking the port, you'll be telefragged and wiped out by the person materialising over you. If you just want to disable a teleport to stop enemies dropping in nearer your base, park a vehicle over it.

Camping

At its worst, the frowned-upon practice of 'camping' involves sitting tight in a relatively safe spot and waiting for somebody to pop out of a teleport or be reborn at a known respawn point (the latter is, as they say, the suck). There are a few things to counter it, such as stepping backwards into the teleport ready to blast anyone behind you, but you may end up hunting down your assassin in another life. Fortunately, the maps do their best to stop anywhere being totally safe.

Rocket hop

Halo doesn't normally allow what was called grenade-hopping in *Marathon* and rocket-jumping in *Quake*, but you can achieve the same effect if you grab an overshield or if you bump up the default health levels in Edit Game types.

The idea is to point your SPNKR at the ground as you're running forward, firing a missile as you jump so that you ride the explosion upwards for greater height. You'll take damage, of course, but if it only wipes out your self-replenishing shield for a few moments then you can recover more or less completely.

It's more a trick for trying to reach new areas than a serious multiplayer tactic, but worth trying just to see where you can get. If you're just eager to explore the unreachable places of the mp maps, set health and shields to 400% and throw a grenade before you rocket jump to gain even more uplift, or get a friend to add an explosion to the mix. At the top of Damnation, for instance, there's a door to two pipes overlooking one of the sniper rifle. Rocket and grenade jumping on the pipe can get you up on the wall to the top of the level. **XX**

If you want to reduce the damage from a heavy fall, or even make a clean drop, you can use a trick called 'knee-bend'. This involves crouching just before you fall, which reduces the impact of the fall. You can also use a trick called 'knee-bend' to reduce the damage from a heavy fall, or even make a clean drop. You can also use a trick called 'knee-bend' to reduce the damage from a heavy fall, or even make a clean drop.



TURN OVER NOW FOR OUR COOL SSX TRICKY TIPS →



STAYING ALIVE

Expert tips: **ssx tricky**

ssx tricky

There's only one thing better than belting down a mountain with Run DMC—and that's doing it with mate-awing class. Ready to get crazy?

Pick a rider, pick a board, and hit the slopes in World Circuit—the sooner you start racking up those stat points, the faster you'll progress. If showing off's your forte, pick Kaori or tufty-bearded Marty. For racing, pick Elise. For all-round prowess, pick Moby. Simple.

RACING

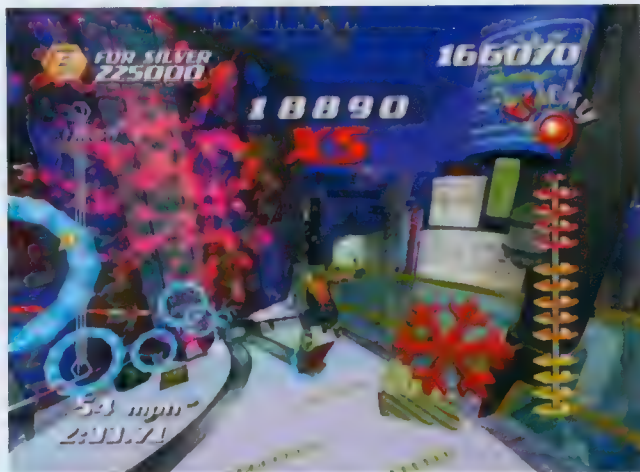
The most instantly rewarding game mode—most of the skills you'll pick up in racing are transferable to showoff mode, so it's worth starting here...

Prewind Early

Once you're on your line, start prewinding straight away. With enough preparation, it's possible to pull a Misty or Rodeo where your head almost scrapes the snow—charging up about a third of your boost bar without any loss of momentum.

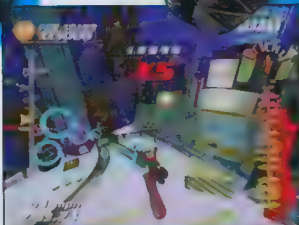
Don't Show Off

In race mode, there's usually enough opportunity to keep your boost bar full without going out of your way. With a reasonably good character and lots of prewind, a Misty's almost as simple as a 180. Jump late, for a long, flat, racer's leap—and resist the urge to show off, even if your mates are watching. Anyone who's taken a triumphant flyer off the final jump, only to see a calculating rival nip in underneath and scoop gold knows this pain from bitter experience. Don't let it happen to you...



BOARD STIFF?

Then get a new one! Generally speaking, Alpine is okay for grinding, but if your racing style involves tricks, stick to the standard BX. For Showoff courses, opt for a Freestyle board—and, for real top scores, the Über-board!



TRICKY TREATS

Having trouble filling up that trick book? Here are a few practical pointers...

- ❑ If you're going for specific tricks—such as the Misty 720—which require more horizontal spin than vertical, prewind diagonally until takeoff, then immediately switch to just holding the horizontal direction. This'll stop you over-rotating and scuffing it.
- ❑ Remember, moves are *slightly* more difficult from Switch—but they still count in the book.
- ❑ Certain grabs speed up your rotation in certain directions—such as the Mute with a 180. Learn to pull moves in the right combinations.
- ❑ Tap the D-pad for a Late spin—but don't go for vertical rotation, as you'll never make it.
- ❑ Use spins that complement the direction you're jumping in—so if you're going up a half-pipe side, try a back-flip. If you're going forward, use front-flips. Simple.

Tapp Boost

For some reason, tapping boost—as opposed to holding it down—makes it last up to three times longer than normal. Using this on flat race sections—the end of Elysium, for example—is the key to getting a good overall time on particularly long and challenging races.


Get Punchy

At the start of a race, it *might* be worth hanging back to sucker-punch the leaders, but it's much easier to simply get your meter charged, then plough through the pack on full boost. You'll knock down the lighter players—like Kaori—simply by doing this, and you won't lose any speed. Conversely, when the pack's tight, use boost to avoid getting knocked down yourself.

SHOWING OFF

This is what it's all about—breathtaking last-minute Mistys, impossible grind combinations and fearless jumps off cliffs. Showoff's the ultimate test of skill.

Jump Early

Don't leave it until the end of the ramp before you leap—let go of  at the end of the paint stripes for a near-vertical trickster's jump. In half-pipes, jump about halfway up the side.

Use The Replays

Still can't figure out how to get that last red? Head past it, then slow your run down and change the camera angle in replay—chances are, if it looks impossible to achieve by conventional means, it's related to a shortcut you haven't even seen yet.



The most skilful grinding requires deft use of combos, speed and boost.

- ❑ Brake before you hit the grind—the slowdown makes the entry easier to judge, but also turns your board around, giving you more room for error. Just don't slow down too much.
- ❑ If you're trying to land a grind from the air, the same applies—do a late spin with the D-pad just as you're about to fall past a rail, and you'll balance on it.
- ❑ Boosting makes balance easier, but increases the chance of falling off on corners. Steer just before you reach them to stay on course.
- ❑ On long grinds, you might run out of boost with continuous grinding—just do a tiny jump on a straight section to keep it topped up.
- ❑ Don't just go for obvious grinds. Adverts, fences, trees, cables and wall edges can all be hit, although some are trickier than others.

Hidden Air

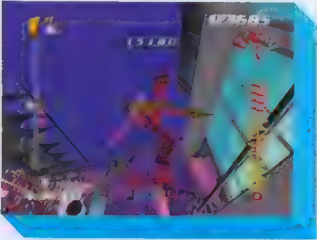
Don't rely on ramps—some of the biggest air possible comes from hitting tight bends at the right angle, or jumping just as you hit a miniature bump. Master these hidden possibilities and you'll always have your boost bar topped up.

Über Moves

Remember—you can't cancel an Über once it's kicked off. Learn the move times for your characters—Eddie's Gut Buster's relatively quick, but his Worm takes ages. Unless you're jumping off the corners, it's almost always worth combining an Über with a frontside Misty or Rodeo.

Recovering

You prewound too much, took it too far and now you don't know which direction you're spinning in. First off, *don't panic!* Just let go of your grabs and use the left analogue to right yourself quickly. As long as the board's relatively flat to whatever you hit first, you'll be all right.



FRIENDLY FIRE

Cruel as it sounds, it's much easier to pick on the friendly characters than the aggressive ones. If you're desperate for boost, hassle Kaori—she won't often fight back. Just don't do it in real life.













COLD AS ICE

Not good enough? Fancy a change of racer? Then the answer's obvious—you'll just have to cheat! Enter the following codes at the title screen—you'll hear a confirmation noise when you've done it properly. (If you don't hear anything, repeat the process, this time taking extra care over each button you press.)













Full stat points

Hold  +  and press , , , , , , , .













Mix Master Mike

Hold  +  and press , , , , , , , . Choose any boarder at the character selection screen and he or she will be replaced by Mix Master Mike on the course, with the Übers of the character that was originally selected. Repeat the code to disable its effect.










Mallora Board

 +  and press , , , , , , , . Release  +  and if you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a sound. Choose Elise and start a course. Elise now sports the Mallora Board and a blue outfit.













Annette Board

Hold  +  and press , , , , , , , . Release  + . Choose Kaori and start a course. Kaori now boasts a full Tricky meter, and a faster board.

Sticky Boards

Hold  +  and press , , , , , , , .

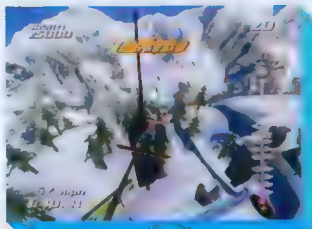
Unlock Everything

To unlock every unlockable object in the game, including all outfits and boards, go to the title screen, hold  +  and press the following: , , , , , , , . Now release the  +  buttons and you should hear a sound. Start the game to see the liberating effects of the code!



STAYING ALIVE

Expert tips: ssx tricky



- 1** At the start, do a quick 180 for boost, then head through the yellow course markers on the right and hit the cable.



- 2** Blue signs appear early on, but they'll lead you into deep powder with only a few yellows scattered about.



- 3** This blue sign signals a tunnel shortcut, which is marginally quicker than the main track, so only useful when you're in a hurry.

garibaldi

Garibaldi's very much a course for beginners—nothing too challenging, but not too much potential for individual flair, either. There are a couple of nice grind shortcuts, but it generally isn't worth straying too far off the main track.

RACING

The biggest trick's resisting the temptation to fly off every jump—stay low, stick to the cable when there's a huge ramp on either side, and you'll easily beat the AI racers. The best shortcuts here aren't too risky, and normally involve shaving off a couple of seconds rather than leaving the track entirely.

SHOWOFF

Easy—steep slopes and heaps of yellow ramps are added for Showoff. Your main priority's having the Tricky meter full whenever you hit one of these jumps, as you'll easily be able to pull a Misty-Über combo off the top of them. With practice, you should be able to nail that gold medal score with a single trick.

REPEAT PERFORMANCE

As MC Rahzel says: "Same trick's only half the boost." It's also half the points, so if you're pulling the biggest-scoring tricks, vary them by doing a different basic grab on the end.



- 4** The cheekiest shortcut in the game is this bank near the end of the run—just jump straight over it to save a clear five seconds!

snowdream

Another easy one to scoop golds in once you've sussed out where you can earn the big points, although you'll want to start using shortcuts a lot more. Hit the pipe grinds for easy combo possibilities, and don't be afraid to clout other racers in the tight sections.

RACE

Performing tons of grinds along the spectator stands will cut seconds off your time—but only if you're prepared to boost along them as you go. Most involve sharp shifts in direction, so keep the board at right angles to the grind, and try to shift it over so that most of the board rests on the *inside* of the turn—that way, you'll stay on the rail even if you slide out on the corners.

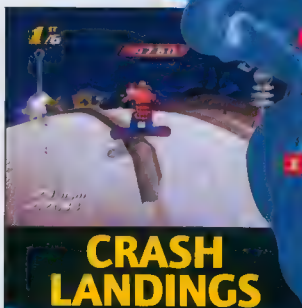
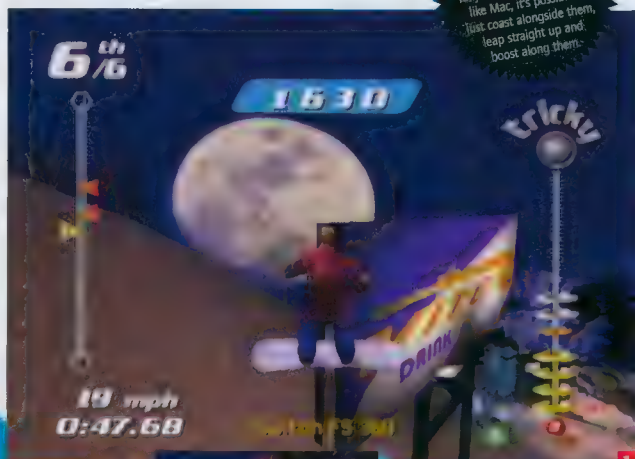
SHOWOFF

Again, there's really not much point in leaving the track here, although it's important to nail the striped grinds as a way of getting the tricky meter full for occasional big jumps (and bigger point-scoring duties). The end section's the easiest to get big air in, preferably using flat 360s on live tighter turns for easy boost.

Rivals will watch and weep.

ON THE FENCE

The final section of Snowdream's full of fences to grind—if you've got a fully-statted trick character, like Mac, it's possible to just coast alongside them, leap straight up and, boost along them.



CRASH LANDINGS

Lots of fences here—ideal for practising your recoveries. If you misjudge a jump and you're going to crash, angle the board so it's flat against the obstacle, and you'll bounce off. Just remember—you don't get the points until you hit the snow. Head left here, and you can fence grind onto a pagoda for an easy orange in Showoff. If you're racing, though, it's worth carrying straight on for a trick cable/snowblower grind that skips all those tedious banks.



5



JUMP AROUND

RACING

Face it now—you have to do the enormous cliff run shortcut. Don't be afraid to slow down slightly to line up those vital jumps, but resist the temptation to stop—you'll need the momentum. It's also possible to make up huge time on the final half-pipe—if you've got a full meter, just head up to the lip and boost straight along—otherwise, avoid the glass panels with the shallowest turns possible. *Don't* try jumping them



The central section full of grinds and flakes is crucial here—try to nail a combo by linking two grinds and a snowflake-snagging Uber. Apart from that, make sure you've got plenty of time for the final half-pipe, and switch the view to Far so that you can gauge the line needed to grab the snowflakes. Try to make about six jumps, but leave yourself a minute to do the final section

mesablanca

The first course where the best race route's completely different to a good Showoff run, so don't expect many opportunities for peer-pleasing tricks. As a rule of thumb, stay on the main track for points, and hit the underground mine grinds as soon as possible for a fast race. Time to sort out that grind-boosting.

RACING

Lots of risky moments here in a two-player game, go for the shortcuts you know you can nail—so, for instance, the first red sign and the open-air minecart probably aren't worth going for, since they're difficult to hit consistently. For high scores, of course, you'll need to take every chance there is.

SHOWOFF

There aren't many big air opportunities in Mesablanca, so you'll need to use lots of twists on the grinds to keep your boost sufficient. For short jumps, use the quickest Ubers—like Moby's Nac Nac—combined with horizontal spins to minimise your chance of crashing out with a mashed face full of powder.

GRIND OVER MATTER

After sharp turns in the earlier courses, Mesa's the first to feature long, looping grinds. Hold down boost all the time, and push the left analogue in the direction of the turn you're taking to stay on easily.





STAYING ALIVE

Expert tips: ssk tricky

mercury city

Full of high-risk, high-return off-piste sections, Mercury's a do-or-die course. It doesn't matter how many practice runs you pull off flawlessly—racing against a second player's tough, because any slip's brutally punished. Stay calm.

RACING

The most important thing is to run through the first half of the course straight down the centre. In single-player, it's enough to win the race—in two-player, it'll pressure your opponent into trying the riskier shortcuts down the second half. Finally, hit the gap between the buildings near the end of the course to skip the miniature half-pipes, and you'll gain ten seconds on anyone taking the long route.

SHOWOFF

Much easier than racing, this one. It's worth taking every risk, though, because the air's usually huge. Watch out for lampposts and bridges, of course—if you misjudge into one, you'll have to push the board around to cushion the impact. For the biggest Snowflake opportunities, hit the multi-storey shortcut then, and leave the underground shortcuts well alone. Crucially, make sure you've got plenty of time for the descending half-pipes at the end of the run—they've got oranges in, but you'll get deceptively big air.

WHOA!

Long rails and big jumps mean you need to jump accurately here—boosting and prewinding isn't as important as finding your line, so slow down if you need to adjust your course.



aloha ice jam

Aloha's a fairly boring course—if you go off-piste to an area full of penguins, you'll actually lose time and trick opportunities, so it's hardly worth bothering. The important skill to master's coming on the melting ice—keep the turns tight or you'll slide out and off the track.

RACING

One vital thing to remember here—don't fall down the gaps. You'll lose momentum, and recovering's difficult. Apart from that, stick to the main course. Tackling the raised tubes is worthwhile if you can do it at top speed, and the added advantage that doesn't really matter if you fall off.

SNOWOFF

Getting big air off the banks is important here—you won't get many opportunities to pull an Über otherwise. The best way to rack up big points is linking jumps and average tricks through orange snowflakes, keep your boots dry and going for the safe reds.

SPLASH

Watch out for the early patches of water in the early sections—you can't afford to take the corners wide or you'll tumble off a cliff as you skitter along the H₂O. Handy for clouting other racers off, mind.





STAYING ALIVE

Expert tips: *ssx* tricky

tokyo megaplex

It might look pretty, but Tokyo Megaplex is probably the most annoying course in the entire *SSX* Tricky line-up—full of bits where you can get randomly tripped up or fired into a bumper. Speedy recoveries and quick reactions are the most important skills to learn—it's crucial to be able to right yourself in a bad fall, avoid pop-up obstacles and clang off metal with the board instead of your head.

RACING

Pay attention to the other racers, and always be ready to steer around any bumpers they trigger. Sticking to high ground's the best way to avoid trouble, although obviously you'll want to steer clear of the air-jets.

SHOWOFF

You get three runs through here, so don't forget to vary your route each time to nail as many red snowflakes as possible. Remember, too, if you're going for the glass-topped section, the same bit won't be there twice. The top score isn't too tough

to reach, though it's even worth backtracking to the air-jets in order to light all the Tricky letters within the first lap. You should also be aiming to get air off the green and blue banks, and hit the buttons to activate those handy yellow ramps. Ignore the long grinds—there aren't enough multipliers on them to make it worthwhile.

JET SET

It's easy to fill up with Ubers on this course—prewind, but release the jump button just before you hit an air-jet. Ideally, you should be looking as if you're about to crash before you fly up into the air.



alaska

At first glance, Alaska looks like an absolute bar steward, but actually it's just a supreme test of the abilities you've already learned. It's also a really long course, so don't panic—any time up to the half-way half-pipe, you can easily recover the scruffiest of runs into something respectable. Think of it as your chance to shine against formidable odds.

RACING

Keeping your boost topped up shouldn't pose any real problems during this course. Every shortcut here's a risk, though, so if you're hankering for a bit of gold round your throat, stick to the main course. In two-player games, go for the easier cut—like the cheeky stalactite smashes in the cave sections. Otherwise, full throttle and keep those jumps *low*.

SHOWOFF

To nail that coveted gold medal, aim to get all the Tricky letters lit by the time you hit the half-pipe section—boost through the cave sections, because you'll only waste time on near-worthless tricks otherwise. For a truly monumental score, though, you'll want to get big air off the banks right at the start—learn those angles and go for flat spin/Uber combos.

BANK IT

The jumps here all rely on you catching the banks at the right angles. Again, slow down before you go into the approach run, then boost up to top speed—or you'll never make the bigger leaps.





STAYING ALIVE

Expert tips: **ssx** tricky

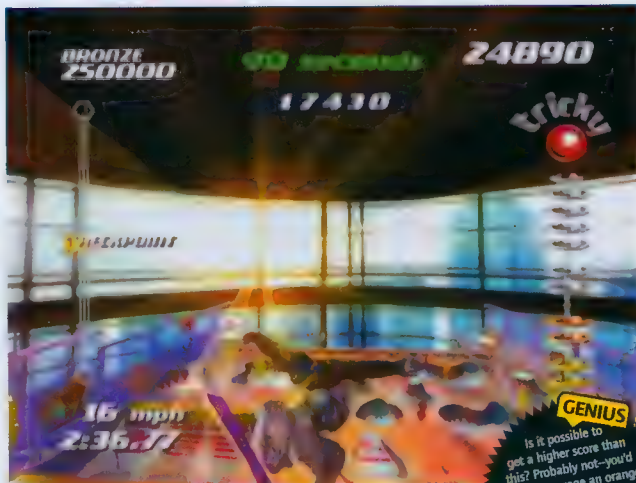
pipe dream

Judged on the opening flyover, Pipedream's the most daunting course in the game—a mass of possibilities with no clear way to make the best run. In reality, it's nowhere near as complicated as you might think—getting huge air, hitting multiple rails, pulling Übers and even backtracking up the course is no problem, but what you want to be doing is hitting every red snowflake possible in the time you've got. You'll want a fully statted out character for this. Ready? Then we'll begin.

1. Your main goal's to make it into the large half-pipe at the end with full **TRICKY**, as many points as possible and just enough time to nail all the snowflakes inside. Speed's essential. So...

2. Go straight and do a triple Misty unethical experimental through the 3x flake. Keep going straight. Ignore the half-pipes. They're made of snow, so you cannot get enough speed for really big tricks. At the big drop, pull a triple rodeo signature Über.

3. After you land, head for the small half-pipe to the left, but don't take the rail—it'll eat a 3x flake that you want to get while doing a double Über. Once in the half-pipe, boost up one side, hold back until you stop. Boost down and you should have time for two small Übers. Try to stay in the middle of the half-pipe in order to get the 3x flake on one side, and the somewhat high 5x flake on the other side. By this point, you should have full **TRICKY**.



4. Head out of the half-pipe via the rail in the ground. Jump at the end of the rail and do a quick Über, landing in the large pool. Immediately after landing, hit Select (so you don't have to waste time getting out of the pool). Head for the left edge of the course and do another triple Misty signature Über through the 3x flake.

5. Land, use the yellow ramps for more Übers if you've got time, then get on the rail that goes between the legs of the big Luther statue. Boost up to save time. Grab the 5x flake on the rail, continue boosting and holding up, and then fly into the half-pipe. Keep holding boost and **↑** because you want

maximum air. On every jump, try to do one signature Über and another short Über. If you're about to repeat a trick, add a short grab at the end so you aren't penalised.

6. The *really* high 5x flakes are extremely hard to get. You have to go off the lip of the half-pipe at 74 miles per hour and jump right at the very end. When you've got about five seconds left, hit **↑**, which will reset you outside the half-pipe, and then cross the finish line.

GENIUS

Is it possible to get a higher score than this? Probably not—you'd need to average an orange or red Über every ten seconds or so. The best way to improve it is to chain everything into a combo...

In staying alive next month...

TIPS EXPLOSION!

Our latest quality free gift is an essential guide to all things Xbox, featuring more cheats than a stadium full of floppy-haired Argentinian footballers.

PLUS!



- ▶ We give the best Xbox tips on **XBOX** game Commands 2
- ▶ That is because this cheat code is **EXTRA 2** Street Fighter
- ▶ Finally, we have the best Xbox tips on **XBOX** game Commands 2

Improve yourself with next month's **XGamer**. Let's learn to burn!

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ISSUE 7

29
JULY

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Right now, Xbox is freely available from over 250 independent games shops throughout the UK. The 150 listed here have Xbox demo pods NOW, so you can try Xbox before you buy.



- >> THERE ARE over 250 independent stores stocking Xbox hardware and the full range of games
 - >> OVER 150 of the stores have Xbox demo pods. See the listings on this page and ring your local shop for details.
 - >> INDEPENDENT STORES have specialist staff with specialist knowledge - they'll have played the games before they sell them to you and will give you expert advice!
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XBOX insider

XGAMER DIVES DEEP INTO THE VERY SOUL OF XBOX...

XBOX

**ACE
GEAR
COMPETITION!**
PAGE 126

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Everything you need to know about online Xbox. It's more than just a reading... it's outrageously essential.

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It's where you get to the chance to rant and rave.

116 BURNING QUESTIONS

You've got issues with Xbox, and we've got the answers. Nice one.

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Get XGamer right to your door, shed loads cheaper. Makes sense.

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The history of videogames under one big London roof. You'll learn a thing or two we did.

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Project Zgd as it goes from drawing board to the game store shelf.

124 THE LOWDOWN...

E3, the biggest gaming show of the year... in the world.

126 CAPTION COMPO

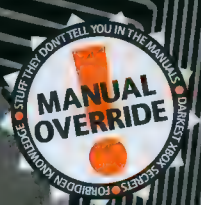
Win and even a nuclear war wouldn't wipe the smile from you.

128 NEXT MONTH

"Ah XGamer, with these magazines, you are really spoiling us!"

102 XBOX LIVE

Soon, every Xbox in the land will be dancing around, hand in hand, in a huge loving chain. We take apart the ethernet port to find out how being online will change the way you play...



**27 PAGES SO TOP
YOU'LL SQUEAL**



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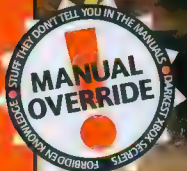
TOP FEATURES

Voice Communication
Match-making
Downloads
Gamertag
Friends List
Global Ranking System



XBOX

XBOX ONLY!
Xbox will not be compatible with any other consoles or PCs



First in line **Mark Donald**

XBOX LIVE ONLINE GAMING SERVICE

★★ Xbox online ready to roll ★★ World poised on brink of all-out war ★★ Friend against friend, brother versus brother ★★ There's no going back ★★ This is gonna be huge... ★★



Microsoft has declared its sweeping masterplan for massively multiplayer carnage on a global scale.

The doors are being flung open to an innovative online gaming arena dubbed Xbox Live. This

new cyber-colosseum will pit Xbox warriors against each other in the greatest mass participation games since Christians Versus Lions topped the bill. Of course, online gaming is nothing new and has been touted for years as the next big thing. But Microsoft has seized the initiative, proposing an online service on an unprecedented scale in terms of quality, investment and support. It's announced the games, the special features and sketched out how the service will work. It's staking everything on creating an experience that will change the way we play games forever.

This is what it's got...

THE HEADLINES

Location	North America, Japan, Europe
Cost	\$2 billion (Microsoft), less than a fiver per month* (you)
Games	Over 100
Multiplayer	Yes
Downloads	Yes
Time-slicing	Yes

*Price situation hazy in Europe. See page 112 for more

FACT-PACKED

Everything that's known about...

- The Starter Kit p.104
- Gamertag p.104
- Broadband p.105
- Matchmaking p.105
- Friends List p.106
- Downloads p.106
- Global Ranking System
- Advanced Features p.107
- Xbox Communicator p.107
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- The Price p.112
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TAKING ON THE WORLD

From Alabama to Zürich, Xbox Live promises to deliver a global playing field on an unparalleled scale. Here's how.



As man is to gibbon, so multiplayer gaming is to the single-player experience.

Anyone who's tasted co-op *Halo*, LAN *Quake* or even 2Up *FIFA* knows that multiplayer is simply a higher state of being.

Humans are more fun to play than AI. They invent quirky strategies, they spring surprises, they get emotional and when they lose, they cry. Brilliant. But the greater mass of these game-enhancing units lie beyond the reach of even an Xbox controller cable. They must be sought online—and this is where it so often goes wrong.

THIS WAY UP Online gaming is a fragile beast. While it can be great, it only flourishes under certain conditions that have previously been the preserve of hardcore PC gamers and the adult population of South Korea. Earlier attempts to make online gaming work have been piecemeal, bedeviled by technical issues and even undermined by the behaviour of gamers themselves. Xbox Live seeks to combat these evils with a range of innovative

multiplayer features that could finally bring online gaming to the masses.

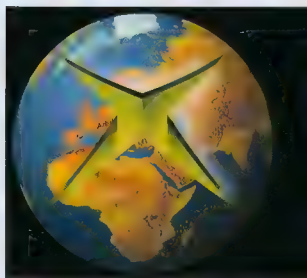
Xbox Live will sink if it's a pain to use. A gamer's faff tolerance is low, so Microsoft are determined to keep things simple. They showed us a video that purported to show a gaggle of gamers using Xbox Live. If the vid's accurate (and it wasn't too grainy), then navigating the service is as easy as using the Dashboard. Stick the starter disc in your machine's gob for the first time and software will unlock the dormant online capabilities of your Xbox. This adds a new 'Play Live' section to the Dashboard. Insert an online game disc, select Play Live and you'll be sent hurtling into cyberspace. You'll have to register on your first visit (see p.112 for more on this and pricing), but after that the promise is you'll never be more than four or five button pushes from gaming.

Compatibility is another major issue for PC gamers. I personally gave up online PC gaming because I spent more time bombing out of games and trying to make

the infernal machine work than I ever did playing. Happily, every Xbox is built the same way, eliminating such reliability problems at a stroke. What's more, the all-important hard disk and ethernet port are already onboard, so there's no need to upgrade. Multiplayer gaming needs mass adoption to succeed. The more steps people have to take to get online, the less likely they are to do it. So Microsoft has sensibly swept away as many stumbling blocks as possible. Contrast with *Final Fantasy* makers Square. It's already blaming low sales of *FFXI* on the lack of upgrade hardware available to PS2 owners, and slow uptake

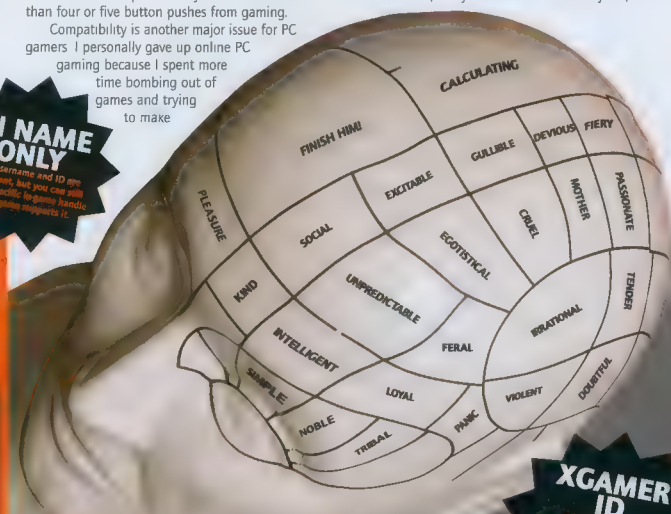
GAMERTAG—SPECIAL FEATURE

Stars will be born in the combat arenas of Xbox Live. What's more, everyone will know who they are,



IN NAME ONLY

Your username and ID are permanent, but you can only have a specific in-game handle if the game supports it.



THE HUMAN ANIMAL

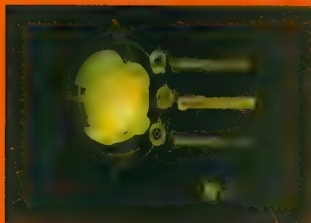
So much more interesting than a stream of zeros and ones, and the reason why online play can be so brilliant, and so frustrating.

XGAMER ID

One day we may meet and do battle. Today—dead! Tomorrow—Gawd! Tomorrow—Gawd! Tomorrow—Gawd! Tomorrow—Gawd!

WHAT YOU GET

When you buy an Xbox 360 console, you get the Xbox Live Gold membership for one month free. This gives you access to all the online features of Xbox Live, including the ability to play online games, download games, and more. You can also buy Xbox Live Gold membership for a year, which gives you access to all the online features of Xbox Live, including the ability to play online games, download games, and more.



HOW TO GET IT ON

The lowdown on bagging broadband for Xbox Live



Phantasy Star Online should deliver the cooperative, multiplayer nirvana we're all hankering after—and the Japanese get it free when they sign on.

thanks to Gamertag. It's your unique online ID (chosen when you first register) which reveals your true identity to everyone on the service. This single, permanent cyber-name is used to identify your account and to open a sesame of games and services. It'll help maintain your player profile so that your favourite car or character is automatically selected when you wade in and, crucially, Gamertag will help keep track of your stats. Rank and reputations are important in any community, and even more so in a virtual one.

PERSONALITY CLASH Multiplayer gaming is only fun if you enjoy the company of the people you're playing with. Ideally, you'd always play with mates, but cyberspace is filled with distant strangers and being told "U sux" by Mr U Sux from Alabama, starts to lose its appeal after the 36th time. Filtering out the spongs is an essential part of any decent multiplayer experience, so it's vital you can reliably recognise who's out there at a glance. That's where the single identity system will prove invaluable.

Pygmy-minded eejits—who reckon themselves something special from the other end of a phone line—might just muster a little more respect when they realise they can't shake their reputation →



The ethernet port. Connect to broadband here for top-notch online gaming

WALLED GARDEN

Xbox Live is a closed shop. When you connect to the net with Xbox you'll be locked straight in Microsoft's games database and no snaking the wires along the way. There's no way you can get a PC.



WHAT NEXT?

Once you've got your broadband sorted, the next step is to set up your Xbox Live account. This involves creating a Gamertag and a password, and then linking your account to your Xbox console.

MODEM CONUNDRUM



If you're using a modem to connect to the internet, you'll need to make sure it's compatible with Xbox Live. Most modems should work, but it's always best to check the specifications.

ISP

When choosing an ISP, look for one that offers a good reputation for customer service and reliable service. It's also important to check the speed of the connection, as a faster connection will result in better online gaming performance.

ANYTHING ELSE?

There are a few other things to consider when setting up Xbox Live. For example, you should make sure your Xbox console is updated to the latest firmware, and that you have a stable power supply.



Even more Unreal than before: Xbox Live will open a plethora of portals to provide the kind of global head-bonking challenge frag-freaks adore...

LET'S DO BATTLE

Xbox Live comes engorged with a sackful of special features that will make us love to make war...

XBOX LIVE MATCH-MAKING SPECIAL FEATURE

Everyone likes to be on top. That's why Xbox Live is rustling up a full match-making service. It'll help hook up like-minded players of similar ability, because it's no fun being someone's bitch all the time. And Gamertag's stat-tracking should ensure you get a fair game, safe from the social dwarf who thinks its cool to rampage through nursery arenas picking off innocents still struggling with the control system.

The match-maker's other speciality is to usher you into the game of your choice with minimal hassle. When you burst into a game lobby you'll be faced with two picks:

Quick match The no messin' option. Click the hot button and it'll shove you straight into the first available low ping game.

Optimatch Lets high-maintenance types take their gaming exactly as they like it. You can order Xbox Live to show you sessions that suit your skill level, or you can host your own game and fiddle with options until your heart's content. Choose game type, map or track, how many laps/kills—there's nothing like a bit of home advantage to flatter the result.

THE PING AND I Ping is a constant source of grief for PC gamers. It measures how long it takes machines to exchange data over the Internet, effectively governing how smooth and fast your game is. Online gamers can waste valuable game time

searching sessions to find the lowest ping. As a rule of thumb, the further your game travels around the Net's intestines, the higher your ping. Brilliantly, Xbox Live handles latency automatically. It should put you straight in touch with the lowest ping gamers and keep a wary eye on line speed at all times. The upshot is you'll most likely be pitched against players who live closest to you, which raises questions about Europe vs America vs Japan, but more on that later

XBOX LIVE FRIENDS LIST SPECIAL FEATURE

As a wise man once said, "There's nothing more enjoyable than watching your best friend fail."

How true, especially when he's chowing down on your exquisitely delivered rocket. Multiplayer gaming is an emotional experience that peaks when you're smacking up familiar faces. But what's this? The Xbox Live Friends List? A roster of your bestest online mates? Oh yes. It's the place where your favourites sit smug in the knowledge they'll be invited to any online bash you throw. And it's a virtual little black book, where you can delete anyone from Alabama who reckons 'u sux'.

Meet someone you enjoy gaming with and you can invite them onto your Friends List. According to the demo video, this can even be done mid-game by selecting the favoured name from a list of gamers in the session. A message pops up on the chosen

one's screen and they can accept or reject the invite. After that, your top geezers will appear on your Friends List every time you go Live and it becomes the ideal tool for rounding 'em up.

Suppose you've arranged to play a game of *Unreal* but you turn up late. You can check your Friends List to see which of your mates are online and what game they're playing in. But then, or a whim, you decide to play *Phantasy Star Online* instead. You can set up your own game and tell your Friends List to send out the invites. The summons appears on your mates' screens even if they're in the middle of another game (subtle-like, it won't scupper a fragile lead in the final seconds of a game). The invited can then check their own Friends List to make sure you're kosher and defect to your new game in a few button presses if they want.

Features like Friends List should help take the pain out of online gaming but they're only viable because Xbox Live is an integrated operation. The Friends List will only work because Gamertag keeps track of who's out there. Gamertag's info is trustworthy only if players are restricted to a single identity.

Match-making is simplified by the Friends List and potentially powerful because all Xbox online games are united under Live conditions. If the games were scattered across different services then it'd increase the likelihood of feature incompatibility, incomplete info and frustration for the gamer.

WANT MORE?

The Unreal team revealed in a demo that their players should be able to find out who's online and what game they're playing.

XBOX LIVE DOWNLOADS SPECIAL FEATURE

Get goodies down the line

With the Xbox Live Downloads feature, you can now download games and demos directly to your Xbox console. This means you can try out new games before buying them, or download games that are on sale. The feature is available for all Xbox Live Gold members. To use the feature, you need to have a valid Xbox Live Gold subscription. Once you're logged in, you can go to the Downloads section of the Xbox Live interface. Here, you'll see a list of games and demos that are available for download. You can click on a game to see more details, including the game's cover art, description, and price. If you decide to download a game, you can click on the 'Download' button. The game will then be downloaded to your Xbox console. Once the download is complete, you can launch the game and play it. The same process applies to downloading demos. This feature is a great way to discover new games and save money on your Xbox Live purchases.

Some games, like *Phantasy Star Online*, have a demo that you can download and play for free. This is a great way to try out a game before buying it. The demo is usually a short, self-contained version of the game, but it gives you a good idea of what the full game is like. If you like the demo, you can then buy the full game. This feature is also useful for downloading games that are on sale. You can see the sale price and buy the game at a discount. This is a great way to save money on your Xbox Live purchases.

ADVANCED FEATURES

GLOBAL RANKING SPECIAL FEATURE

If you want your numbers crunched then Xbox Live is the place to be. The Gamertag system can track your every kill and chart your rise and fall in the global rankings. This opens up the possibility of an online community that spawns official tournaments, virtual F1 championships, national leagues and international matches. The *Unreal Championship* development team has already confirmed plans to build a global ranking system into its game. Professional gaming leagues exist in the US and top pro gamers earn a living out of it. Competitive online gaming is even bigger in South Korea where big matches command substantial TV audiences and star gamers are feted as celebrities. So who knows what could happen with a global, integrated system like Xbox Live? You could pick up that joystick and discover you're the best player in the world. You could become a living legend. You could stalk the halls of cyberspace with a reputation as a notorious killer, the mere mention of your name sending other gamers squirting to the bathroom. Perhaps.

HOW IT WORKS

PRO-CELEBRITY

Top pro gamers have thousands of online fans and can earn cash for making personal appearances. Fidelity and Viewstat sit atop the gaming tree right now.



SOUND AS A POUND

Xbox online gaming is making all the right noises. Turn on, tune in and give 'em some verbal...



Just as talkies wiped out silent movies so voice communication could transform online gaming. The Xbox communicator headset, which lets you talk directly to other players in

game, is Xbox Live's real masterstroke. Single-player games have interjected the emotion-soaked crackle of intercom transmissions for years to heighten the sense of involvement. So just imagine how it'll feel to be caught in the thick of a live experience. My best multiplayer memories are of LAN *Quake* in the PC Gamer office. It was pure adrenaline on a stick because we were SHOUTING! The cackles of victory, the oaths of revenge, the yelps of panic saturated our pleasure centres with emotional feedback that fuelled the excitement. Voice is the magic ingredient that's missing from regular online gaming. Text-based contact is too simplistic to transmit any sense of 'being there'. But the headset has the power to drop you into an emotional arena as well as a gaming one. It feels like your enemies are perched on your shoulder. It makes it real. And imagine how voice will transform a co-op game like *Counter-Strike*. It'll be brilliant to co-ordinate attacks on the fly, give commands, call for back-up, and politely observe that they're coming out the goddamn walls. At last, Microsoft Word is truly up. ☒

VOLUME CONTROL
Cranks it up from hush-hush, operations to ear-splitting raucousness. The sound quality is good and clearly distinguishes voices so you can separate friend and foe.

DIRECTIONAL MICROPHONE
Love the sound of your own voice? Move the microphone to opponents hear more of you and less of your baying fan club sitting alongside.

QUE?

HEADPHONE CABLE SOCKET

COMFY

It has been known for quick 'first to ten' deathmatches to overrun slightly for reasons of revenge. Happily the headset is light and flexible enough to remain comfortably snug on the most mischievous of heads (Curley's well into the new lineup). The Communicator slips neatly around the back of the bonce and the single earpiece can be switched to the left or right lug.

MUTE 'ON' INDICATOR LIGHT

MUTE BUTTON

Oh not Mr U Sux is on the line, it's spongy control to blank any player from the session list. Or mute all for the full silent treatment.

PLUG 'N' BRAY
The rubbery, shiny, like the top slot and only the top slot of the headset. It looks bulky but its light weight won't bother your wrists.

FRIEND OR FOE

Carbine talk can cut free so you can hit the black button on the joystick to cut-off opponents and whisper a strategic aside to team-mates only.

VOICE-MASKING



"U sux"

TRANSMISSION VAMPED

PARENTAL CONTROL

It might just get a little messy in there. Things may be said in the heat of the moment. Things we all regret later. Nothing worse than in the average primary school playground, mind you, but if you don't want junior to broadcast the world with the maturity of his verbal then you can fiddle his Xbox Live account. Disable voice or ears or both. Hell, lock him in a box and let him out when he's 18.

SPECIAL FX

Possibly wishful thinking this one, but Microsoft reckon there's all manner of voice toolfoolery up for grabs. If your character is in a cave, your voice could echo off the walls. If underwater, your voice could be distorted ('gottle or gottle?') and if drenched, your speech could be slurred. Come on game developers, be anal!

HIS MASTER'S VOICE

Meanwhile, Forza—the makers of the speech-recognition software used by Xbox—reckon developers will be able to create voice-activated games where the player can direct onscreen action verbally. That could transform single-player games as well as online. How slick would squad-based games be if you could direct your AI comrades with verbal commands rather than fiddling with menus. And imagine a modern version of Little Computer People where you could soothe your digital chum with the sound of your voice.



UNREAL EXPERIENCE

Hands on with *Unreal Championship* at the first Xbox Live trial-run in Los Angeles.



We shuffle into the metallic pod against the hubbub of 80,000 people attending the E3 games expo. As the door is sealed we are shrouded in an eerie silence, locked away from the world like a womb-bound

baby. Staring out of the glass casing we can see the queue of expectant gamers snaking back out of the door and the announcer preparing to commentate on our deathmatch. Slowly we turn to face the pod.

An Xbox glints before us and a Voice Communicator hangs on a hook by a sweaty joypad. We'd already been briefed by one of Microsoft's agents on handling the kit—just hook the headset around your ears so it sits at the back of your skull. We pop it on. It's comfy. We feel like Tom Cruise in *Mission Impossible 2*, or a shoe shop salesman. Cool.

Within seconds a brash American voice cheerily slurs "helloooo". It's one of our opponents—a fifth of the enemy force ranged against us. Suddenly a voice from beyond the group, it must be the compere, asks us if we're ready and the countdown begins. 3... 2... 1...

Our battle in some half-jungled external chasm

showcases the Xbox debut of the ultra fast, homicidal shooter *Unreal Championship*. We admire the scenery and get caught with shrapnel from a grenade—dead in the first minute. We respawn as another voice barks "What are you doin' Yeeman?" "It's Y. I. Man." I mutter, forgetting that the rest of the gang can hear me. Nobody responds, clearly Georgie doesn't translate well in Los Angeles.

DIE YOU BASTARDS! Bad start. This is weird. I don't want to talk to anyone. After a bit of skulking around, and with the distant rumble of exchanged gunfire the first 20 seconds pass in "radio silence"—clearly everyone is a bit embarrassed. Then, from nowhere, and like the voice of some messed up god from a Peter Molyneux game comes the rasping of a psycho duck, "die you bastards!" he quacks. At which point everyone cracks up. Brilliantly, the Voice Communicator holds up perfectly—we can pick out every player with clarity. And what an ice-breaker!

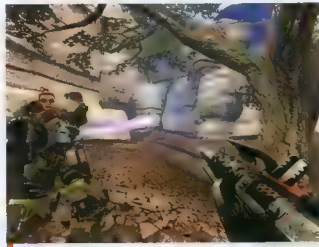
Suddenly, buoyed by the voice masked duck man, we all start celebrating victories with little expletive outbursts. You'd have thought we were playing a team sport, if we weren't blamming lead into one another

and watching the blood soak through the charred grass all around us. With each more inventive reference to "kissing my ass" giggles and laughter follow.

Yes, we were laughing. That's because, despite the stereotype of network and online PC gaming, this was far from the hardcore experience of being put to the sword by tragically engrossed outcasts. This was fun, like laughing with mates who share a common interest, but who've never met before. Stop vomiting—it really was bloody good fun.

Before we knew it, the six minute deathmatch was over. The doors eased open and we plucked the voice communicator out as if it was an umbilical cord. We didn't want to leave our gaming womb. Ever. Believe those nightmarish sci-fi films, once you plug into Xbox through the Net you may never leave home again.

✖ Lee Hall



This kind of faceoff can only end one way: some foot yelps over the Xbox Communicator to distract you and then you're turned into a big, red splodge.

PLAY LIVE

So what about the games, eh? EH?



■ **PHANTASY STAR ONLINE** A classically Japanese fusion of sci-fi and fantasy, robots and monsters, not to mention magic spells that go off like atom bombs.

COUNTER-STRIKE

■ Co-op combat ■ Valve ■ Mid 2003

Spawned from the software engine of PC smash-hit *Half-Life*, *Counter-Strike* has become one of the most popular online first-person shooters ever.

The Xbox version offers a single-player campaign where you team up with AI pals for anti-terrorist action in a variety of real-world locations. Mondo laffs, but the multiplayer mode is really where it's at. Pitting teams of anti-terrorists against balaclava-clad baddies, it's more than just deathmatching—you'll need to work intelligently with your teammates to slot the opposition. Perfect voice communicator territory, n'est-ce-pas? Expect new downloadable maps and mission types to become available as *Counter-Strike's* popularity swells. (See p.21 for more).



■ **COUNTER-STRIKE** One team plays the terrorists, the other the counter-terrorists. Coordinating attacks is vital and adds a new dimension to shooters.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

■ Roleplaying game ■ Sega ■ Autumn

A hit on the Sega Dreamcast, *Phantasy Star Online* is console-land's premiere RPG. When you play the game, your console connects to the game server, and you enter the PSO world for adventure, combat and, of course, character progression. PSO already has many thousands of devotees from the Dreamcast days (indeed, many still play it on their DCs), and one of the chief



■ **MIDTOWN MADNESS 3** In the blink of an eye, a lap turns into a pileup featuring oncoming traffic, the school bus, Police and—oh no—here comes a juggernaut...

obsessions of the game is the location of 'Rares'—rare spells, armour and weapons. And where the Dreamcast version required a keyboard to communicate with other player-characters online, we get the headset communicator.

MIDTOWN MADNESS 3

■ Street racer ■ Microsoft ■ Autumn

If you've ever fancied flicking the bird at PC plod and haring off through a living, breathing city with your pedal to the metal, then *Midtown Madness 3* will be right up your one-way alley. Taking illegal road-racing as its inspiration, MM3 sees you razzing about in Paris and Washington, taking the kind of short-cuts that would have Steve McQueen twirling in his grave and clearing whole swathes of rush-hour traffic in a single leap. So

hairy are the stunts, you'll be touching cloth. This game is a scream.

The online possibilities are, of course, huge. We anticipate capture the flag modes, stay-alive against the clock modes, and standard race modes. As if racing through massively congested cities can ever be called standard...

DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK DOWN

■ Squad based combat ■ Novalogic ■ Mid 2003

Set in Somalia in 1993, *Black Hawk Down* laces you into the boots of Delta Force and US Army Ranger units as they stage a series of lightning strikes against the tin-pot dictatorial regime in power. And our first impressions? Blinding! Imagine being choppered into a warzone



DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK DOWN The city blocks are densely packed and dangerous as rattraps. Clever use of cover is vital.

with a squad of troops controlled by other gamers, peppering the red-hot LZ with high-powered machine gun rounds from the rail-mounted weapons, then getting dumped off to fight your way through hordes of AK-waving fanatics to the mission objective as a team. Hi-octane fun for sure, and an excellent teamplay prospect

STAR WARS GALAXIES

❑ Roleplaying game ❑ LucasArts ❑ Spring 2003

➔ Massively Multiplayer Online RPG (MMORPG) set in a persistent *Star Wars* universe. Be a Wookiee, a bounty hunter or just check out the full report on page 14

MECHASSAULT

❑ Giant robots ❑ Microsoft ❑ October

➔ The first BattleTech game to hit Xbox, *MechAssault* will offer a massive single-player campaign, and a whopping range of online single-bot duel and team-play options. Expect big customisable battle-bots, huge guns, fully deformable terrain (we like the exploding tower blocks) and a host of different planets to scrap across



STAR WARS GALAXIES You can become a Jedi, but apparently it'll be really hard to get that hard. A mystic Order needs its rarity value.

WELL CONNECTED
Microsoft reckons that 51% of Xbox owners already have us in a very generous group becoming a well-connected group. We're not kidding about the pop.

XBOX LIVE ONLINE GAMING SERVICE

XBOX LIVE GAMES THE FUTURE

Microsoft promise 12 games in the first 12 weeks of Xbox Live's existence. It reckons 50 more games will be available globally by the end of 2003 and that 60 companies have committed to create games for Xbox Live. Here's the complete list of known post-launch games minus a couple of Japanese obscurities...

- Halo Online (Microsoft)
- Counter-Strike (Valve)
- Star Wars Galaxies (LucasArts)
- Ballistics Challenge Online (Microsoft)
- Amped Online (Microsoft)
- Project Gotham Racing Online (Microsoft)
- Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon (Ubi Soft)
- Rainbow Six: Raven Shield (Ubi Soft)
- Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 (Activision)
- Graffiti: Palmer's Pro Snowboarder 2 (Activision)
- Delta Force: Black Hawk Down (NovaLogic)
- Steel Battalions Online (Capcom)
- Lamborghini (Rage)
- XIII (Ubi Soft)
- WRC 2K3 (Sega)
- NBA 2K3 (Sega)
- NCAA College Basketball 2K3 (Sega)
- Spike Out Extreme (Sega)
- Sega GT 2002 Online (Sega)
- Shining Lore (Phantogram)
- Gara Blade Online (From)
- Tooljam & Earl III: All Funked Up (Microsoft)
- Rayman Arena (Ubi Soft)
- Shayde—Monsters vs Humans (Macro 3D)
- Armada 2: Exodus (Metro 3D)
- Dominion (Pharaoh)
- Temis Worlds (THQ)
- MX Superfly (THQ)

We don't want to get overexcited but Konami is also developing an Xbox Live title and Kojima-San has recently spoken about *Metal Gear* online. Meanwhile the *Champ Manager* and *Matrix* teams are both planning online versions of their next games which are slated for Xbox. Yeeessss. All we need now is a decent football game!



MECHASSAULT We fought battles in the midst of nervous cities which had a tendency to collapse around our ears, every time we raked them with lasers. Ha.

WHACKED

❑ Lunacy ❑ Microsoft ❑ Autumn

➔ Twisted freako nutters turn nasty in *Whacked*, Microsoft Studios' latest weird-a-thon. This third-person game pits player against player online in a futuristic game show where contestants blast each other to smithereens with rayguns, giant staplers, rubber duck grenades, and hordes of man-eating chickens. We kid you not. Nurse, my pills!



WHACKED The Running Man meets KFC's R&D department. This skinless fella wanders garish levels hoping someone will end it all.

HOW MUCH?

Xbox Live has great game prospects and an ideal list of online features, but it isn't coming free. Here's the full wallet-stinging SP...

SPECIAL OFFER!

Xbox Live is a subscription service. You pay to play. Microsoft is yet to declare the UK price but the recent US and Japanese announcements give us a clue.

- ❑ The US introductory deal is \$49.95* (the price of a game) which bags:
- ❑ 12 months access to the standard Xbox Live service (that works out as \$4.16 per month)
- ❑ One Xbox communicator headset (see page 108)
- ❑ A starter disc including *Revolt*—a complete online racing game, *Phantasy Star Online*

*That's £34.10 at today's prices.

The Japanese offer is exactly the same, except the lucky devils get Sega's *Phantasy Star Online* RPG instead of *Revolt* and the cost is ¥6,800 which translates as £37.11 in today's money.



Xbox Live is an all-you-can-eat videogame buffet with a flat rate fee paid, no matter how many online hours you stuff into the day. At the US price it's a good deal. Even without the Xbox communicator and the

start-up game (*Revolt* is an RC karting effort that hardly set PlayStation alight, whereas *Phantasy Star* was excellent on Dreamcast), we're still only talking \$4.16 a month which is peanuts. Will that price change? It sure will. Microsoft has stressed this is an introductory offer. It hasn't revealed any further deals yet (any other figures you see are pure speculation) and we're still waiting to hear about the Euro price

QUIDS IN

An announcement about the European side of Xbox Live is due to be made soon, but Microsoft has already said the offer will be similar

to the American deal. It seems more likely we'll be charged £49.95 than a straight exchange rate of £34.10 but perhaps Bill will plump for the price of a game—between £40 and £45. At worst then, we'll be paying a paltry £4.16 per month, and picking up a game and headset into the bargain.

There's a year's worth of playing to get through before worrying about what happens after the first year but there'll be a new slate of prices on the table eventually. How much a subscription is worth when you don't need a headset will probably rest on Live's popularity and how much of it you want. Presumably it'll be cheaper to buy in bulk and sign up for two years rather than six months.

A big question is whether we'll be tapped for extras. Massively multiplayer games like *EverQuest* traditionally rake in their own subscription (*EQ* costs \$12.95 per month) and Microsoft hasn't ruled out charging an additional fee for persistent worlds. Indeed, companies like EA are resisting Xbox Live because they want to score any online fees for their own games. But right now, the battle is to get punters online so it seems unlikely we'll be mugged by any extra costs for some time. Not while there's a full-blooded scrap to be had with the broadband operators.

TOP WHACK

1 INITIAL DISCOUNT (100% OFF)
2 MONTHLY COST (100% OFF)
3 MONTHLY COST (100% OFF)

4 MONTHLY COST (100% OFF)
5 MONTHLY COST (100% OFF)

6 MONTHLY COST (100% OFF)
7 MONTHLY COST (100% OFF)

8 MONTHLY COST (100% OFF)
9 MONTHLY COST (100% OFF)
10 MONTHLY COST (100% OFF)

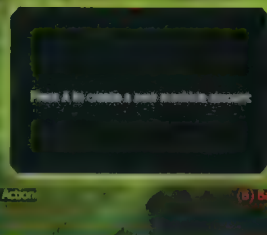
ACCESS GRANTED
ACCESS DENIED

TOP 5 PASSWORDS

Password
Joshua
Promoted
£155
Lithuania



Nothing to do with the picture, but we reckon the price of Xbox Live is really good. It's the present monthly cost of broadband that makes us win.



Every Xbox already contains a jumbling internet powers—the info needed to create an Xbox Live account. It just needs the starter disc to wake them up.

BILL GATES | MONEY: \$2,000,000,000

**EUROPEAN
FORECAST**



**ARE YOU
BEING
SERVED?**

Xbox Live will operate from four data centres in Seattle, Yuluville (Washington State), Tokyo and London. Microsoft is boosting its 'military grade security' will handle hackers, cheats and viruses and say that more engineers built Xbox Live than the actual console.

WILL IT WORK?

Xbox Live sounds brilliant, but just how big a gamble is it, and will the promises pan out?



As Bill is shelling out to the tune of \$2 billion on Xbox Live it had better. Then again some analysts reckon Microsoft has \$38 billion in the bank so it's hardly a last ditch gamble

William's financial muscle will surely overcome any technical difficulties and Xbox Live will benefit from Microsoft's experience of running its online PC gaming operation (see <http://zone.msn.com>). Microsoft is also aware that broadband is still in its infancy and that not many people have it yet. It's not expecting Xbox Live to be an overnight success. Xbox general manager J Allard hopes it'll hook "tens of thousands" of gamers worldwide in 2002. He prophesies "hundreds of thousands" in 2003 and speculates ten million by the end of 2007. A single generation of consoles traditionally lasts five years, so either Microsoft expects online gaming to prolong the

lifespan of Xbox or reckons that Xbox 2 will carry on the good fight.

Commentators point out that people are reluctant to pay for the Internet but if that's the case then how do they get away with it? I pay-off BT every quarter for my Internet access and what about the punters who spend their silver on *EverQuest* fees? TV has never had problems convincing people to pay for its services. Sky has spent millions on exclusive programming that large numbers of people are prepared to pay extra for. The same holds true for Xbox Live. If it offers an exciting experience you can't find anywhere else, then gamers will pay for it. And

Microsoft doesn't look like it's skimping. Xbox Live is probably the biggest investment in online gaming yet. The game line-up looks highly promising and the feature list sends our hopes soaring for a quality multi-player experience. Like satellite uptake in Britain it may take time, but if this doesn't set online gaming on fire then nothing will **xx**

**HELLO
WORLD**

WHAT NEXT?

www.xbox.com/uk



Contact magazine >
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be a flop? Get your
views on whether sleep
Send in your thoughts

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Email it! >
xgame@clubinternet.co.uk

POST APOCALYPSE

Letters have it. Go on, don't be shy... First past the post > Al Bickham

ALPHA MAIL—YOU'RE TOP OF THE TREE...

The write stuff. Our letter of the month receives a year's subscription to XGamer and a first-rate Xbox game.

"IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR..."

FROM > Colin Mitchell, East Sussex
Wow! Picked up my Xbox just over a month ago, and the joy pad seems to be super-glued to my hands. Not since the Dreamcast days has a console been played so much.

We're a large family, and games are part of our life, but this is unbelievable. Number one game has to be *Halo*. Two of my sons are playing through the campaign co-operatively; my other son is playing through his own campaign, and so am I. We sit there helping each other, and together, we're working our way through this excellent game.

When a game brings a family together around the TV (not just to watch *EastEnders*!) then you know it's good.

Aw. Isn't that sweet? When I was young, we didn't have *Halo*. We had *Bubble Bobble* on the NES. And my Dad used to hog it all the time. Not so with Mr Mitchell here.

So how do you work it, Colin? Do you have some kind of *Halo*-rota? Or perhaps a hog-the-Xbox-and-you'll-do-the-washing-up-for-a-week system in place? Whatever, we wish you the happiest of times with Master Chief.

Oh, and one final point: you casually mention *EastEnders*... and your name's Mitchell. Is there something you're not telling us? ☒

"ZY IN THE SKY"

FROM > Peter, email

Your *Halo* busting feature in XGamer 04 was excellent, but featured a number of glaring omissions. Firstly, in the Marathon section, you forgot two fairly obvious links. Link one: Cortana and Durandal (the AI from Marathon) are both names of mythical swords. Two: the cyborgs in Marathon were MJOLNIR mark. Two. MJOLNIR... sound familiar? Yes, it's Master Chief's battle armour.

The other glaring omission is in the web links section—you completely failed to mention the most dedicated *Halo* fan sites on the web, Battleground *Halo* (www.3dactionplanet.com/halo), *Halo* Players (www.realhaloplayers.com) and Rampancy

(www.rampancy.net). Battleground *Halo* features the Black Ops fan-fiction, a story that began shortly after *Halo* was announced and is well worth a read, especially if you

enjoyed *The Fall Of Reach*.

Halo Players has the most comprehensive *Halo* clan listing ever and as for Rampancy, well, one of their team did go on to work for Bungie, so I suppose that must count for something. Back when Matt Soell (Bungie's front man) was posting weekly updates, each of these sites would take it in turns to host the latest update. Between them, they form the core of *Halo*'s fanbase, and don't deserve this kind of neglect. Rant over!

Zy (author of the Forbidden Halo feature)

replies:

First off, the section on

connections between Marathon and *Halo* was designed to be illustrative rather than exhaustive. If you go deeper into the background stories, the Cortana letters, the mystical significance of seven, or Jason Jones' recent implications, then there are far more connections than either of us have mentioned.

But this was a *Halo* exploration feature, not a piece of literary criticism, so I could hardly justify 500 words of text on an old Mac title's backstory in the middle of an Xbox mag.

As for the other point, we've covered *bungie.net* and its links page more than once, from which it is impossible NOT to link to all the top, super-organised fansites. In truth, I find all this clan business a bit elitist and cliquy and chose to direct readers to some less-travelled amateur links and movies I happened to enjoy that month. So I get criticism for helping the underdog instead of performing some imagined duty to advertise already-popular websites (none of which even *think* to slip me a wad of used notes when I do... tch).

Cheers for the feedback though. It's always good to hear from somebody who knows what they're talking about—as you clearly do. ☒

"EX JOY BOX"

FROM > A Bott, email

I wish to make some comments about the X Joybox Converter you nicely recommend in XGamer 03. Perhaps you should warn your readers about the sheer intransigence of the supplier. I attempted to buy one from the URL you printed. The postage was £4. I accepted this because it was coming from Hong Kong. Then, the fun began... the company does not accept credit cards or PayPal. It told me to use the Western Union money transfer—who wanted to charge me £8 for the privilege of sending £10. Then, I was told to send cash by registered post—not sterling, but dollars. I gave up before checking if it meant US or Hong Kong dollars. And if I had decided to pay by registered post, it would cost £4 and take another five days to get there. What a farce.

Cricket Phil Mitchell is Master Chief. What next? The Slater sisters are found out to be the Jackals?

Urk. Sounds like a nightmare. We didn't get hold of our X Joybox Converter direct from Hong Kong Toys, but through a UK importer called Project K (www.projectk.co.uk). We paid a little over the odds (£25—the same price as an official MS pad.) but it's a trustworthy outfit, and you can pay any way you choose. Hope that helps. **✕**

ROCK ON TOMMY"

FROM *Mark Evans, Birmingham*
Thank you for the recent article you ran about Rocky for Xbox. I can quite clearly remember many, many hours (and days!) playing *Rocky* on the Sega Master System. It was a fantastic game I only hope that Rocky's long-overdue return to the gaming world is worth the wait. From what I've seen, my dreams may well be fulfilled. Thanks for another great issue! Oh, and I hope I can beat Ivan Drago in the new game—I never could do it in the original!

Yeah, we're looking forward to *Rocky* as well. Especially after watching all the movies again recently. The highs and lows, the tears and the joy... and the fact that it's one of the hardest-hitting and most playable boxing game we've yet clapped our mitts on. Your excitement is well placed Mark. **✕**

"LEVEL HEADED?"

FROM *Sam Brockwood, Chesham*
I am sick, sick, sick of computer games. Well, actually, that's a lie—I love 'em. But what I hate is a game with no replay value. £45 for ten hours of gameplay? Arrgh!
But there's a light at the end of the tunnel of one-hit wonders—level editors. Yes, I know that they take extra time and effort for developers to build, and sometimes they can be complicated and/or difficult to use. But I'm sure that anybody with an Xbox would be much more willing to shell out £45 on a game which can generate entirely new random levels, or give me the ability to create my own. Think how cool it would be to swap your best *Halo* or *THPS3* levels online then save them to your hard drive?



SPOT THE BULL COMPETITION

Nobody's perfect... not even us.



as *Broken Sword* or *Final Fantasy*, which revolve totally around a pre-scripted tale.

And while we don't think *Halo* suffers for its lack of level editor, we wholeheartedly agree—it would be a wicked addition. You could create entirely new campaigns and, using the Voice Controller, insert your own orders and battle chatter for the player to hear. Gaah, you've got us all excited now... **✕**

"FUTURE SHOCKS"

FROM *Paul David, email*
I want to address a worrying trend with gaming: online games and game content. As a student, it was difficult enough for me to afford the cost of an Xbox, games and controllers when it was released. Now add to that the cost of subscription to a broadband ISP to play the best games... I think I'd be broke, or starving.

Although I like playing certain games online, I think games should be aimed at single-player and split-screen modes rather than online multiplayer. Please Microsoft, don't go overboard on the online ideas. Keep some single-player games for us people who like them, and have friends who come round in person for multiplayer larks. **➔**



➔ We're good at what we do. But sometimes our writing hands suffer sudden bouts of spastic jellyfish slepping, and twiddle squirts from our pens. Tell us when it happens, eh?

✕ In *XGamer 04*, Forbidden *Halo* Secrets, where it says 'nunja dolls', you put an Easter egg logo where it should've been a challenge logo **EGG HEADS!** *Text: 3 1 0 0 0 0*

✕ *XGamer 03*, page 24, briefs: 'Arsenal and Man United and have signed a record' **Twits** *TYPO: CAFFICAL!* *Text: 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0*

✕ **WINNER!** In your *Halo* tips book, you repeatedly refer to Echo 419 crashing in *The Silent Cartographer*. So how does she then pick you up again at the end of the level? **Gotcha!** **BULL PUCKY!** *Text: 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0*

Yeah yeah, okay *Spore* we were so busy shooting *Covenant* and weren't paying attention. Good spot *Peter*, your richly deserved prize is coming

> Daniel Knapman, email
We feel for you.

> Lee Simpson, email
Dive in, brother.

> P Coulthard, email
Yeah. That'll be the meat pies.

> Leo Vick, email
Mmm. Cool name, by the way.

> Chris 8811, email
Yes. And positively weighty isn't it?

> Ruain, email
Yes. And perhaps we should follow the tenets of national socialism.

> Mark Barnett, email
For the last time, his name's Dan. And he's made of flesh and bone like the rest of us.

> Lee Walmsley (again), email
Arse, and we thought it was at the cutting-edge of design.

> John Allen, Stoke-On-Trent
Hmm, interesting John. If enough readers want it, a DVD could be on the cards...

> Paul Freeman, Sunderland
No official plans yet but we reckon *Ms Spheres* is Xbox bound later this year...

WRITE ON



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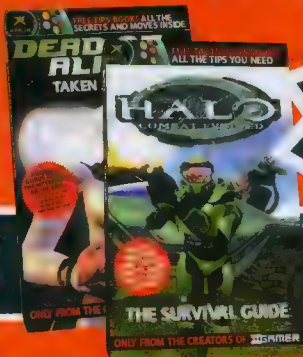
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LAND ON PAGE 126 FOR EARLY INTELLIGENCE ON
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GAME ON

I remember when it were all 2D raster-scan playfields around here... for those whose most distant gaming memory is that first glimpse of Lara Croft's jiggle, a new exhibition is casting back as far as 40 years BH (Before *Halo*).



'Game On—The Culture And History Of Videogames' began when guest curator Lucien King realised that young people only really experienced museums in surly herds, shuffled along by harried

teachers. Beneath the mainstream media-froth about gaming being big business, there wasn't much on the development of videogames as a pop-culture phenomenon. King sold the idea to London's Barbican Centre—whose recent *Star Wars* exhibit showed signs of a progressive shift in its attitude to 'art'.

With over 250 exhibits, there's a perfect blend of old and new—ancient, amusingly futurist consoles (Magnavox Odyssey—1972, Atari VCS—1977) creaking away beside the sleek wonders of Xbox, PS2 and Gamecube. Finally, a pursuit thirtysomething dads can genuinely enjoy side by side with their kids (dad goes dewy-eyed fiddling with *Astroblast's* 'paddle' controller, while junior canes it on *Moto GP*).

It's already hard to remember the pre-PC days, where a 'home computer' seemed like some kind of divine digi-brain (despite, in the case of Sinclair's ZX80, looking like one of those miniature cash registers still used by extremely old grocers). Looking over the ZX Spectrum (early '80s) and Amiga (early '90s), it's the little details that trigger memories: the chunky, rectangular mouse buttons; the way the Spectrum's metal case was shoddily glued to the rubber underlay.

MODERN CLASSICS There are close-ups on the more recent major phenomena (*Pokémon*, *Lara Croft*, *The Sims*) and plenty of old (and free) coin-ops. Some of the selections are odd (*Crystal Castles?*) and the classics (*Asteroids*, *Robotron*, *Defender*...) seem prone to technical tantrums. Everything is tightly themed, even down to sub-sections on game genres, with an excellent section on game design which features a Post-it note-littered reconstruction of how the designers evolved *Grand Theft Auto 3*. It's a sharp insight into how the industry has moved on—from nerdy guys in back-bedrooms to professional design houses where each aspect of a game is broken down and crafted by specialists

FUTURE EVENTS

The show runs until 15 September, and there's plenty of events to back up the permanent exhibits. Game On Screen (Barbican Screen, June/July, 0207 638 8891) is a film festival based on gaming movies (*Tron* right through to *Resident Evil*). But, ideally, not including *Super Mario Bros*. Or that *Street Fighter* thing with Kylie. On Saturday, 7 September, there's a seminar called *The End Of Play* (Cinema 1, 1pm-2.15pm) in which key commentators (hopefully John Matson might have a go) discuss the future of gaming. Best of all, is *The Game On Antique Roadshow* (Wednesday 18 June and Wednesday 3 July—7.30 and 8.30pm), where visitors are invited to bring old hand-held games, consoles and software for slow, teasing evaluations from Hugh Scully-style experts.



Pseudo excesses are few, but there's a rather lonely video installation which, next to the interactive wonders nearby, seems particularly pointless and is largely ignored by the punters. It would have been nice to see a few 'pro' retro gamers demonstrating the arcade games—maybe even a high-score challenge or two. It's also sad to see the whole thing stuck away in the notorious Barbican labyrinth—take a good map. Still, if you love your games, you ought to know your gaming history. Go



Spacewar—the first ever computer game. At the time, respected games mag *DEC PDP-1 Gamer* rated it, "Not bad, 6/10."

THE BEST BITS SPACEWAR (1962)

As you pass through the curved entrance bit, stop gawking at the giant *Pong* screen and turn right for an even more seminal piece of gaming history. In 1962, Steve Russell, a programmer at the Massachusetts Institute Of Technology, wrote the first ever videogame on an early DEC (Digital Equipment Corporation) minicomputer with a cathode-ray tube display and a then-revolutionary keyboard input. Game On nabbed an ultra-rare recreation of the DEC PDP-1 to display the game in a dinky little mock-up of Russell's workstation. You might also wish to kneel in solemn reverence before the original paper-tape code of the game—the first piece of software. Astonishingly, *Spacewar* was a two-player game, and was clearly the inspiration for the boulder-smashing, random-hyperspace joys of *Asteroids* (1979). At the time, it was only played by twitchy boffins on million-dollar mainframes. But you can now have a go on the Internet el.www.media.mit.edu/groups/el/Projects/spacewar/.

COMPUTER SPACE (1971)

Nolan Bushnell, the daddy of videogames, turned his daughter's bedroom into a workshop (presumably, she was relegated to the sofa) and built a stand-up fibreglass cabinet version of *Spacewar*, called *Computer Space*. He had 1500 manufactured, with 13-inch black-and-white screens. But the buttons were too fiddly and they were a failure. There are two on display at Game On—one yellow, one blue, both reeking of future kitsch. Barbarella-style



The latest blonde to shag Hugh Hefner for 'love' is disappointed to find he's so old he's witted into a toupee-topped slop of intestine in a yellow bucket.



The blood rising sight of the classic *Star Wars*. This was the easy bit. Next challenge: zoom past the towers and turrets blasting at your X-Wing. Things really got hairy in the final tunnel run as you hurtled towards the exhaust vent. Remember: physically ducking as your ship sneaked under a low obstacle? Ahh... we do...

STAR WARS (ATARI 1983)

A fine, fine game and one of the first truly immersive gaming experiences which set up today's fixation with first-person 3D gameplay. Wire-frame graphics (a zippier progress on from Atari's earlier, sluggish *Battlezone*), fabulous movie samples, tough-but-fair gameplay... Best of all, it was presented in a cocoon-like sit-down kiosk with a see-through 'viewing area' around the back. Still a better game than its most recent cousin—the overtyped *Rogue Leader* on Gamecube. If there's a queue to play, join it.

GLOBAL GAMING

One of the more museum-y sections of the exhibition is dedicated to the differences between the gaming cultures of Japan, the US and the rest of the world. Europe and the US share a room, with lots of focus on independent game companies and sport games, including a little (but not much) on developers from France (*Rayman*) and Finland (*Max Payne*). The Japanese section has its own, bigger, area, with all the expected manga and anime trappings, and some excellent, playable set-ups of the quirkier Japanese game traditions (life simulations, dating games, train-driving sims).



PONG (1972)

The first commercial public coin-op. Nolan Bushnell founded Atari ('go' in Japanese) and hired a rookie programmer, Al Alcorn, to knock up a test tennis game with two 'paddles' lobbing a ball backwards and forwards. He named it *Pong* after the sound the ball (well, square) made when it hit the paddles or the sides of the screen. Bushnell knew that he was onto something when a test *Pong*, placed in a bar near his office, broke down because it was bloated with quarters. And now, finally, you can play it on a massive screen, safe in the knowledge that you'll be able to have a go on *Robotron* soon. **X**

Remember *Pong*? It was like real life tennis, only without the rackets. Or people. Or net. Or correct scoring system. Or ball. Or three-dimensional playing environment. Or open trainlines. Not quite tennis, then...

GAME ON: THE CULTURE AND HISTORY OF VIDEOGAMES

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2024-2025, 2026-2027, 2028-2029, 2030-2031, 2032-2033, 2034-2035, 2036-2037, 2038-2039, 2040-2041, 2042-2043, 2044-2045, 2046-2047, 2048-2049, 2050-2051, 2052-2053, 2054-2055, 2056-2057, 2058-2059, 2060-2061, 2062-2063, 2064-2065, 2066-2067, 2068-2069, 2070-2071, 2072-2073, 2074-2075, 2076-2077, 2078-2079, 2080-2081, 2082-2083, 2084-2085, 2086-2087, 2088-2089, 2090-2091, 2092-2093, 2094-2095, 2096-2097, 2098-2099, 2100-2101, 2102-2103, 2104-2105, 2106-2107, 2108



**WORKING
9-5**
A FREELANCE
JOURNO'S LOT

Fancy buttering your bread by banging away at joypads and keyboards? Free bars and trips abroad get your juices flowing? Come this way...

Name Al Bickham
Age 27
Company Al Bickham Enterprises

Job title Self employed games journalist

Working on XGamer and other Future Publishing mags

Perks of the job Free games, free bars and being able to kill diseased games before they infect the nation.



Being a games journalist is about Producing consistently pithy, incisive and accessible copy—on time and on topic. Every article (review, preview, feature, whatever) I write is read by thousands, so it's got to be spot on. Being freelance, I make my living by getting commissions based on the quality of my work, and it being on time. If I hand in rough scribbles two days late, I don't get asked back.

Big break My first job in the games industry—staff writer on *PC Gamer* magazine. From there, I worked up to reviews editor for *Nintendo World*, then deputy editor on *Planet PC*. By then, I had enough experience and contacts on various magazines to take the plunge and go freelance. It's far more money—so long as you're in several editor's good books.

Best thing The rush of creative juices when you're writing something you really believe in. Getting a corker of a game to review and seeing your work in print gives you a buzz. Also, being freelance I'm my own boss, I keep your own hours and get paid more for doing more work.

Worst thing Full-time writers get paid crappy basic wages. Although freelancing can get you more, you have to sort out your own taxes (pain in the jacks—get an accountant), no job security, constantly pestering companies that owe you money, daytime telly when there's a dry patch of work, games like *Shrek*.

What's required Self-discipline, a vast knowledge of games and the games industry, a keen critical eye, a good grasp of grammar and the written word, and a catchy style. A home Internet connection is a must. Keep an eye on the world, if you read a newspaper every morning, you'll never run out of copy. And keep writing, even if only you read it, practise makes perfect.

Last word A good starting point is writing tips guides. Send them into mags, you might get asked to write their next walkthrough and work your way up...

XGAMER JOB CENTRE

WANTED: FREELANCE GAMES JOURNALIST

The successful applicant will, after the games are opened, hurry inside our position in their chosen... HYPE, and be able to adapt the... a number of different... experience of games... many... of games... publishing company...

WOULD SUIT: A creative, professional... the... of... analytically-minded, knowledgeable, intelligent... a HACK'S CRACK: £15,000pa (if you're lazy, to £40,000pa... **WHAT NEXT:** Most publishing houses will take on... XGamer.

CV and sample of writing to the HR department... XGamer.

PART 06 > MEETING AND GREETING AT THE CALIFORNIAN MADNESS THAT IS E3.

THE MAKING OF PROJECT EGO

NAME > Dene and Simon Carter

JOB > Co-owners of Big Blue Box

"LA is hot. The room is small. We're having flashbacks to three days we spent in a sweat-box in 'Nam. We were never in 'Nam."



Why We Do E3

Having waved a teary farewell to our newly bonded team (22-hour working days will do strange things to a man), we head off to the airport for E3. We're clutching our precious demo CD in our grimy white-knuckled hands, and the enormous Xbox development kit (with 'guaranteed working' version) is strapped to

Simon's back, making him look like a Borg Ninja-Turtle. While seated in the taxi (or lying on the floor in Simon's case), we mull over the whole curious spectacle that is the Electronic Entertainment Expo...

E3: thousands of sweaty men in suits flirting with outrageously sculpted booth-babes while mole-faced developers meander purposelessly, in the darkest depths of keyboard withdrawal. It's a time for

inspiration as boundanes are pushed back, and competition drives you to even greater pinnacles of excellence. It's a time for pride as you show your hard work off to the world and see it standing tall—even against industry giants. It's a time for wondering why the hell we do it.

Final delivery

The alarm goes off. Loudly. "Crap—it doesn't feel like 6:30 in the morning..."

After piling out of our hotel, jetlagged, confused, and reeling from the sheer quantity of meat American Hotels proffer at breakfast, we hail a taxi and make our way toward the urban barnacle known as the LA Convention Centre. Once squeezed into the cramped interview room, we perform critical last-minute checks ("What do you mean, the CD won't work?") and frantically search for indigestion remedies as stomachs begin churning in synchrony.

Then... the nerve-jangling 'death-row'-style wait for the first jaded journalist.

This is LA. LA is hot. The room is small. We begin having flashbacks to three days we spent in a sweat-box in 'Nam. We were never in 'Nam. Those indigestion remedies tasted funny. The door opens. First journalist. He's Russian.

There's a momentary panic as another flashback sets in, and then he offers an enthusiastic hand and grins. Why are the first interviewers always Russian, we wonder? The journo's facial expression remains fixed throughout the interview. It's like talking to a shark on Prozac.

"And this is the new morphing technology."

Gnn
"Which leads to a compel..."
Gnn
"Erm... Where was I?"
Gnn
"Phew... Sure is hot in here"
Gnn

Robo-journo leaves us with no better idea of how our game is going to be received, and the desire to lock ourselves in the toilet. Still, it's character building.

Alter The Show

Flying back is always a mixed experience. There's always a little regret: some feature didn't come off the way you'd intended, or glitches showed up which you would swear weren't there in the studio.

Usually, though, we come back astounded that this industry has learned so much in such a short space of a time, and genuinely excited about some of the games coming our way. Considering that we spend so much of our lives making games, it reminds us how privileged we are to be doing something we adore—and earning a living while we're doing it—22-hour days notwithstanding. **X**



SEE PAGE 42 >
FOR OUR FIRST
HANDS ON WITH EGO



insider lowdown on...

E3 GAMESHOW

It's the biggest videogame event of the year. A cross between Blackpool illuminations, an arcade and a strip-joint. But what really happens at the Electronic Entertainment Expo?

You're planning a single, annual event to showcase every new weird and wonderful game on every games console known to man. You've got an entire industry, an army of journalists and a juggernaut of one crazed game zone. So where do you hold this digital feeding frenzy? Yep, Los Angeles, home of the nutcase.

STRIP JOINTS Every games mag in the world yelps on about E3 like you know what it is; chucking in the odd rib-tickler hinting at stripclub debauchery. We're not going to tell you what goes on after hours after all, what goes on *hour*. Stays on 'till—but it's time to bust the myth of one of the world's biggest conventions. And we've even done a diagram

As you can see, the show is rammed with people from start to finish. It's three days of trapping around huge halls with naff music blaring and cheesy Americans introducing wrinkly wrestling veterans to greasy fans. Once you've dodged the gargantuan chests of a thousand silicon "babes" and run past the German educational software stands you even get to see some games. And, boy, is it worth it. **X**

ESCAL-ATE HER

Every country has its share of big fat nutters, but America seems to lead the world in the pie-eating stakes. You'll see thousands of hardy capitalists in E3. Their gluttony extends beyond food, however, as they'll greedily gorge any freebie snatched in front of their manes. Free *Play* solitary towel, anyone?

GREY PAY DAY

There's nothing like a geeky convention to swell the dwindling bank accounts of ageing celebrities. This year Huggy Bear, Rowdy Roddy Piper and plenty more turned up for *2p* and a packet of Marlboro. But the stars of their manes. Free *Play* solitary towel, anyone?

"IT'S A BOY-GIRL!"

Like aliens from the planet Mmmmmmm, there's a section of Far East society who seem never to have left their own bathroom. These perpetually giggling people photograph every sight they see. They're not really bad Klingon outfits... You should have seen the flashbulbs when editor Mark Donald walked in...

SWEET HONEY

The organisers of the show are always kind enough to rent some eye candy to ease your aching peepers. But, while teenage Americans love getting snapped with a white-haired stick of tanned leather, most sane people avert their gaze out of shame when someone is being paid to eye them up. Sad.

TOTALLY FLAKED

You'll never cease to be amazed by the raw craziness at E3. Activision even had a big half-pipe with presumably famous BMX riders pulling almighty tricks. It was about as interesting as the Queen, until they started crooning. Now we laughed at 'cool dudes' with arms smeared that beat into the deck...

HAIL KOJIMA!

What a terrifying sight: a huge floor full of brainwashed worshippers laughing at every joke, working at every prompt and sighing every time the three minute video of *Metal Gear* starts. It's not really a game, it's a performance. It looks good, but it's nothing but a head you into a semi-conscious state of gaming inhibition. Is it?

WE HAVE LIFT OFF!

In an attempt to make every game seem like the most cutting edge creation known to man, the scene of floor space are peppered with huge enclosures, pods and multiple-player gaming stations designed to look like techy spaceships. Unreal might get away with it, but *Lego Fighting V7* Come on.

KEEP WRITING...

There he is. Look... there, with the bag. Desperately trying to look interested after he's just vomited in the bags for the fourth time today. The lesser spotted Game Journalists must see every single title in the vast sea because you lot can't, the really shouldn't have had that second half of lager last night...

THE HIGHLIGHTS

WIN! THE TELLY THAT TURNED THE WORLD ON ITS AXIS!

A silvery hunk of eye-pleasing telesensuality



'You Crazy Fool!'

Name _____ Age _____
Address _____

Postcode _____ Email _____

Remove this form (or just copy it) from the page. Fill in caption with belly-bustin' humour. Post, email, personally deliver, pigeon carry, or whatever, to the address on the right. Tick box if you would prefer not to receive info on other offers.

Readers Most Wanted Chart

While you've got a stamp on the lick, we want to know which five games have you fidgeting like Jonathon King reading the Scouts trade rag "Dib Dib Dib".

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____



Excited? You should be, because we're chucking another pile of state-of-the-art gear into the air for whoever can caption the highest.

If you've come out empty-handed in previous word battles, keep the faith. Ever since we started sticking empty bubbles onto mad pictures, the national average telly size has gone up two whole inches—and we're not going to rest until everyone's got a massive one. Television, that is.

We've been dancing through the daisy fields with THQ, the very fellas who engineered the fantastic *Moto GP: Ultimate Race Technology*, so we can bring another huge ray of sunshine into someone's life. You'll wake up one morning, everything normal, but by the time you've returned to the land of nod, over £1,200's worth of gear will have found its way to your gaff. The prize? A Panasonic TX32 PL4—the only telly that can be seen from space—will be your gateway to visual splendour. A copy of *Moto GP: UR7*, your greatest wheel excitement since the London Eye. And, finally, an Xbox to link game and telly together. Once all three items are suckling from each other's teats, your gaming experience will be so grand you'll think you're a Roman Emperor sat over the Colosseum. Five runners up will win a copy of *Moto GP*.

To the left is Mr T, aka BA Baracus, aka Clubber Lang. He popped his head in at the E3 this year to coin a few quid promoting *Rocky's* Xbox game. We

want you to think of something really funny for him to say, so we can take turns reading each and every entry out from the postbag while the XGamer team listen in. So funny up the bubbles and blast 'em off to

The 'You Crazy Fool!' Compo
XGamer Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street,
Bath, BA1 2BW

Or, if you fancy relocating a few posties to the gro valley, email your gut-wrencher (with all the yoo-related info crumbs) to:
xgamer@futurenet.co.uk

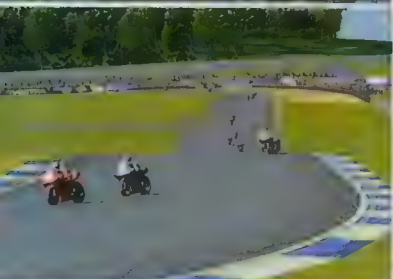
☒ Closing date 28 July 2002

☒ Winners will have their top quality knackers exposed to the public in issue 08, which parks its pert bottom on your local news stands on 23 August.

The Rules...

No purchase of XGamer is necessary. The Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. No employees of Future Publishing or companies involved in the competitions can enter. There is no cash alternative to prizes. No more than five entries per person. Crap entries will be used as confetti at a wedding between a man and horse. People who do air guitar to Chas & Dave are not allowed to enter, nor are people who use crushed dogs as frisbees. The rules are here to protect you and keep you safe while you sleep at night.

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Issue 04 caption compo the final winners...

"JAKE THE PEG"

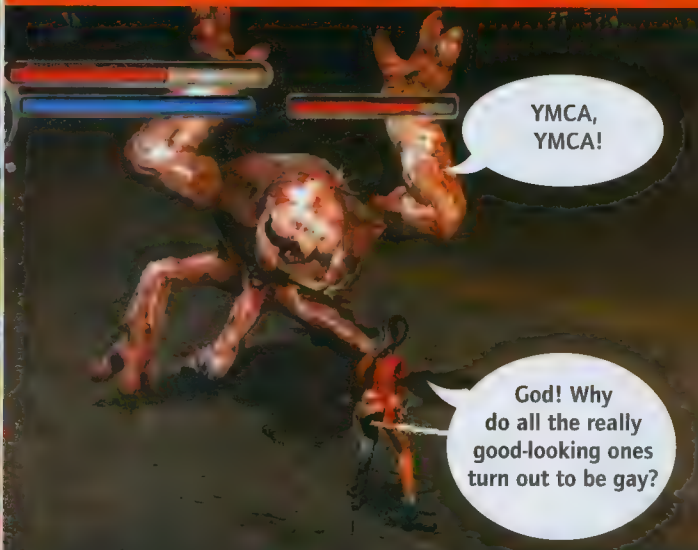
Judging by the huge number of entries received this month, our picture of an ugly three-legged monster has struck a chord with a lot of you... and a dirty one at that...



We gave you a screenshot from *Hunter: The Reckoning* featuring a giant beastie and a warrior lady. You gave us hundreds upon hundreds of mostly smutty entries in return. We like to think we've heard (and used) every word there is for the old 'third leg', but

you've put even our good selves to shame. Just call us Mary Whitehouse and tuck us into bed at 9pm.

But which entry tickled us the most? A 32" Panasonic television, Xbox and copy of *Jet Set Radio Future* is still sat in the office waiting for a new home, just like a sad puppy in the pet shop window. Really, we've heard it whining at night, in everything



THE WINNER! Congratulations to **Paul Ireland** of Essex for penning the winning entry. It was a quality quip, son. Enjoy your prize: a 32" Panasonic television, Xbox and copy of *JSRF*.

As the syntactically-challenged Yoda would have it, fair and generous we most certainly are. Not content with satisfying Paul's filthy Xbox needs, we have now discovered, in faux surprise, that something still resides in our capacious prize cupboard... Five more punsters are being rewarded for their efforts with a pristine copy of *Jet Set Radio Future*. And they are, in no particular order of filth...

Monster: Well, Trisha, since appearing on the show I've put on 500 pounds and

then found out my mother was my father's sister.
Hunter: You've been sent by Kilroy, haven't you?
Adam Ay, London

Monster: Is my mascara running?
Hunter: No, but your wig's fallen off!
Heddywee, London

Monster: Hey Janet, it's me... Michael.
Hunter: You've gone too far this time, Jacko.
Andy Wray, Cheshire

Monster: Is this the addition for *The Lord Of The Rings*?
Hunter: Well, yeah, but when I said I'd like a monster with a big part, I didn't mean...
Matthew James, Telford

Monster: You said you were going to blow me away.
Hunter: Calm down, I'm only pulling your peg.
Mark Powney, Shropshire

Congratulations to the runners up—copies of *Jet Set Radio Future*, lovingly wrapped, are winging their way to you now.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF **XGAMER**

0077 NightFire

WITH MY ROLLED
UP XGAMER, IT'S
THREE'S COMPANY

WE RIDE
SHOTGUN
ON BONDS'
LATEST
GLOBE-
SAVER!



OUTLAW GOLF REVIEWED!



MORROWIND REVIEWED!

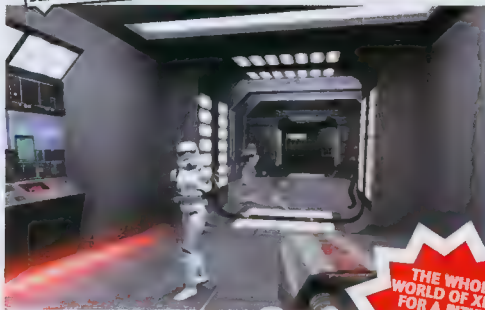


HITTING SHOPS MONDAY JULY 29

GALLEON PREVIEWED!



JEDI KNIGHT 2 PREVIEWED!



THE WHOLE
WORLD OF XBOX
FOR A PITIFUL
£3.20!

SEGA GT 2002 PREVIEWED!



CRAZY TAXI 3 PREVIEWED!



PLUS!

MIND-BENDING REVIEWS

Commandos 2 ☒ Tour De France ☒ Antz Extreme Racing ☒ Enclave
The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind ☒ Outlaw Golf ☒ ... and that's just
the foreplay...

LIFE-PLANNING PREVIEWS

Sega GT 2002 ☒ Panzer Dragoon Orta ☒ MechAssault ☒ Crimson
Skies ☒ Quantum Redshift ☒ Galleon ☒ Star Wars: Jedi Knight II
Knights Of The Old Republic ☒ James Bond 007: Nightfire ☒ Crazy
Taxi 3 ☒ Tony Hawk's 4 ☒ Mat Hoffman's 2 ☒ House Of The Dead 3
☒ and another transit van's worth...

TIME-TRAVELLING TACKLE FROM THE FUTURE

We've gone all *Tomorrow's World* to see what hardware you'll be getting to grips with when you're grey and stinking of wee-wee. By enticing guest hardware boffins out of their laboratories and into the sunny XGamer offices, we've uncovered the juicy details on their current projects and visions of the distant future. Lightguns that will let you shoot real people on the telly, joypads that are always up for a matey hug when you're feeling low, and more.

VAMPIRE SLAYING MADE EASY...

☒ Buffy The Vampire tipped to ribbons for easier route of passage—it's as if the little lady is there herself, holding your hands while you play.

FREE BOOK THE REAL XBOX MANUAL!

☒ The Xbox Survival Guide. Everything you need to know about Xbox, a wealth of cheats and what secrets are lurking underneath the big X.

ONLY IN NEXT MONTH'S XGAMER ON SALE JULY 29

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RUMINANTS!**



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DANGER!**

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THE SENSIBLE CHOICE FOR THE POST-APOCALYPSE



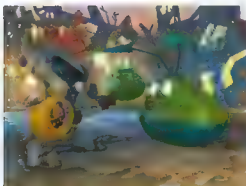
**ESCAPE
DEVASTATION!**



**CREATE COHESIVE
RELIGIONS!**

NEXT ISSUE OF **XGAMER** ON SALE **MONDAY 29 JULY**

So, just how good was E3 for the Xbox?



Bionis: The Time Sweeper



Far Cry



Mech Assault



Brute Force



Metal Gear Solid 2 Substance



Planter Dragon Ota



Tom Clancy's End War



Andy McLean: Team of AS



Unreal Championship



TimeSplitters 2



Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell



Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball

104 games examined and exposed

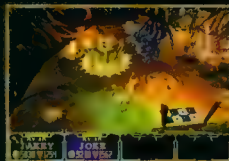
E112: the definitive guide to E3. On sale June 20

For the quest, for the battle, for adventure.

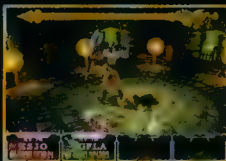


GAUNTLET[®]

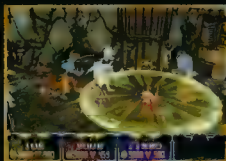
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xbox overload

NUMBER
OF GAMES IN
DEVELOPMENT
FOR XBOX...

300

the hottest xbox games

A glimpse of the games that'll make every Xbox owner proud.



If you ever doubted the Xbox, the next eight pages will show you just how game-rammed Microsoft's black doorstep really is. With a blockbuster title such as *Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance*, which is out on Xbox two months before any other format, and a rare mix of killer sequels, great new concepts and Xbox exclusives it's going to be a damn good year to be a gamer.

Names such as *Unreal Championship*, *Doom III*, *Return To Castle Wolfenstein*, *Deus Ex 2*, *Timesplitters 2*, *TOCA: Race Driver* and *Counter Strike* represent the cream of the gaming crop and will set blood pumping the world over. But the best news of all is that a few titles have appeared from nowhere as either surprisingly impressive tie-ins or brilliant original concepts.

Ubi Soft's *Splinter Cell* stole the show at E3 in Los Angeles this May—it's a stealth action game that makes use of precise animation, amazing lighting and strong gameplay to form a potentially *Metal Gear*-busting adventure. *Steel Battalion*, Capcom's mad-as-a-trouser-press mech game, complete with a 40-button controller, is a graphical delight. *Blinx* will change the way you play platformers. *Project Ego* will change the way you play RPGs... the list just goes on.

it just gets better

LucasArts' *Indiana Jones* tie-in is only just up and running, yet it seems to capture the spirit and character of its lead character brilliantly. *The Thing* proves that movie licences can be innovative—try to keep your pals happy while retaining their trust and thwarting the hordes!

Microsoft themselves are trotting out plenty of impressive games—*Wipeout*-like *Quantum Redshift* looks ace, as does *Midtown Madness* and *Mech Assault*. However, Bill Gates' biggest single contribution to the Xbox push for glory is the announcement of the Xbox Internet gaming service. Xbox Live is set for a worldwide release by year end. As well as a string of first-party titles, such as *Halo Online* and *Project Gotham 2*, third-party games by the sackful will allow you to team up with, or against, pals through your phone line. Better still, you'll get to shout at 'em in real time through the Voice Communicator too! You get the picture. Things are lookin' good...



XBOX LIVE!

Unreal Championship will fully support online play, including Voice Communication for teaming.

unreal championship

❑ Publisher Infogrames ❑ Developer Digital Illusions ❑ Due November

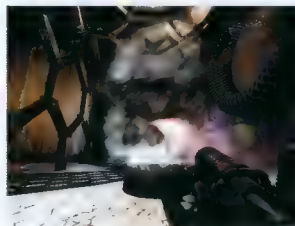


The legendary first-person shooter will explode onto Xbox with better weapons, heaps more maps, a flood of characters and more blood and guts than a turkey farm on Christmas Eve.

New special moves, double jumps and tons of tightly-designed arenas mean no wall will be left unspattered. Nor will the ceilings, as you cheat death with pals, online opponents or against fearsome bots by blasting out goo, lethal electrical charges, multiple rocket launchers and even plain-old shotgun shells.

While you fight, bark insults at your friends and enemies, disguising your voice using the nifty-as-you-like Xbox Voice Communicator. Hear them scream, then quack like a duck.

Anticipation rating ❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE

❑ Publisher EA
❑ Developer Eurocom
❑ Due November

Bond's making a return to Xbox with another non-film plot filled with first-person shooting. An environmental campaigner is a secret despot who's gonna take over the world, best shoot him before he does. Space, snow and sea levels should keep things nice and varied and we're hoping for a few new birds to bed too.

Anticipation rating ❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

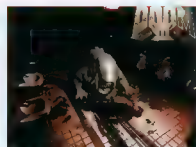


TUROK EVOLUTION

❑ Publisher Acclaim
❑ Developer Iguana
❑ Due September

Soon you'll be given the chance to re-wipe out the dinosaur kingdom in a first-person shooter that's looking more meaty than a T-Rex burger. With a luscious, green eco-system full of beasts offering their heads as trophies, and weapons of such power as to cause 300ft mushrooms clouds, this will be the carnivore's choice.

Anticipation rating ❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



DOOM III

❑ Publisher Activision
❑ Developer ID
❑ Due TBA

Every first-person-shooter you've played owes itself to Doom. The original (1993) made legends out of its creators (who then went on to make the Quake series). Doom III looks like causing the same planet-quaking effect. With all the knee-trembling horror of Silent Hill strapped to enough firepower to keep a militant organisation in the headlines, we can barely wait.

Anticipation rating ❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

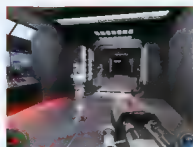


RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

❑ Publisher Activision
❑ Developer Raster Productions
❑ Due Spring 2003

Everyone likes shooting Nazis, and soon you'll be able to join in the fun with the reincarnation of the first ever FPS. Storm the Third Reich's favourite castle and do battle with the worst kind of evil. Genetic engineering and zombies also join in the fun. The PC version sold like half-price ice-cream thanks to critical acclaim, the Xbox version should be better still.

Anticipation rating ❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



JEDI KNIGHT 2: JEDI OUTCAST

❑ Publisher Activision
❑ Developer Vicarious Visions
❑ Due 2003

Yet another instalment in the Jedi saga, this time seeing you don the robe of Kyle Katarn as he fights (as always) against the darkside. A nice blend of laser shooting and sword swinging, the PC version was reasonably well received so hopes are high for the Xbox encounter. Be mindful, young one.

Anticipation rating ❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



MEDAL OF HONOUR ALLIED ASSAULT

❑ Publisher EA
❑ Developer EA
❑ Due TBA

The PC super-hit was one of the best games of recent years. Storm Omaha beach in the most brutal battle in history and carve a path to Hitler's gaff. All the weapons that were on hand for the real heroes have been built in so it'll be fun massacring the evil pigs. We can hardly wait.

Anticipation rating ❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



counterstrike

❑ Publisher Microsoft ❑ Developer Valve ❑ Due 2003

E Crafted by mod-makers from the legendary *Half-Life* engine, *Counter Strike* on PC is an anti-terrorism, squad-based shoot-'em-up classic.

The Xbox version features Condition Zero, a single-player add-on in which you form a crack covert team with AI buddies and pop caps in asses in locations that are dead ringers for real-life terrorist hotspots such as the Middle East. However, the game comes into its own as a multiplayer experience, and is built on brutally rubbing out opponents through teamwork, patience and planning which will net glorious victories. In other words, it's ideal for the Voice Communicator.

This is your chance to go live with a team of international specialists and bash Bin Laden.

Anticipation rating ❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



TIMESPLITTERS 2

❑ Publisher Eidos
❑ Developer Free Radical
❑ Due September

The sequel to the fantastic *Timesplitters* (yep!), prepare to travel through time to do battle with pesky creatures again. You'll take your space and time mannes through everywhere from the wild west to Neo Tokyo so expect plenty of aliens in cowboy clobber.

Anticipation rating
❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK DOWN

❑ Publisher Novalogic
❑ Developer Novalogic
❑ Due Spring 2003

Based on the book of the film, *Black Hawk Down* is a gritty squad-based fighting game. You get choppered into hot spots where hordes of militia blast rockets at you and then land deep in hostile villages. Using whatever cover you can scramble to you must systematically take out enemies without prejudice. Cold... it's online too. Hot.

Anticipation rating
❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



ANDY MCNAB: TEAM SAS

❑ Publisher Rage
❑ Developer Rage
❑ Due September 2003

It might sound like a hardcore warfare sim, but *Team SAS* is a squad-based first-person shooter which borrows heavily from arcade-style blasters. Chunky bullet displays and over-the-top explosions aside, this dense jungle combat game will have you bricking your pants while you empty your mini gun. Not till next year, though.

Anticipation rating
❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



SWAT: GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM

❑ Publisher Vivendi
❑ Developer Argonaut
❑ Due 2003

Set in 2020, a futuristic SWAT team will roam the globe tracking down the big players on the international crime scene. A mixture of all out blasting and sneaking around will accompany the huge armoury of tools at your fingertips. They're touting it as a *Halo* beater, let's wait and see shall we?

Anticipation rating
❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



XIII

❑ Publisher Ubi Soft
❑ Developer Ubi Soft
❑ Due Spring 2003

Stick trendy-as-you-like cel-shaded graphics through the *Unreal 2* engine, chuck in a bit of humour and garnish with stealth. Apart from a tired metaphor, what have you got? Yes, a recipe for a rather good game. Based on a cartoon series, and set in the '80s this online compatible blaster allows you to use everything as a weapon. Not everything hurts, though. Feathers, for instance.

Anticipation rating
❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



HOUSE OF THE DEAD 3

❑ Publisher Sega
❑ Developer Sega
❑ Due October

A lightgun game with real heritage, *House Of The Dead* makes the leap from PC and Dreamcast by adding red blood and letting you choose your path as you blow the faces, arms and everything else off scores of gnashing zombies. Mercifully, the cel-shaded design has been dropped in favour of raw gore. This one could get messy.

Anticipation rating
❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

status:
genius

tom clancy's splintercell

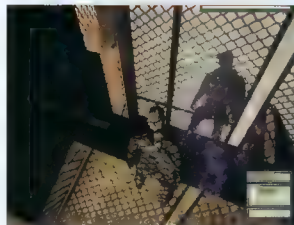
❑ Publisher Ubi Soft ❑ Developer Ubi Soft ❑ Due December



Third-person high-level espionage games seem to be all the rage these days, and *Splinter Cell* looks like being one of the finest. You'll take the role of Sam Fisher, a member of the dark and mysterious third echelon agency that adopt hugely unethical methods to clean the world of terrorists and crime bosses

Based on Tom Clancy's book of the same name, stealth and cunning will be required as you carry out missions of the utmost danger. With 14 levels and a bigger arsenal than North London, this looks like it'll set the world of Xbox alight.

Anticipation rating ❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

❑ Publisher EA
❑ Developer Eurocom

Harry's returning to Hogwarts for a second term of magic wand action. A dark plot involving his Mudblood classmates will no doubt have fans of the books dancing in the streets. A 3D arcade adventure with spell-casting and mini games, let's keep our fingers crossed he produces some gaming magic.

Anticipation rating ❑❑❑❑❑

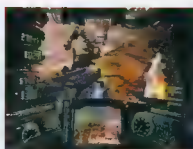


X-MEN: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

❑ Publisher Activision
❑ Developer Warthog/Gene Pool
❑ Due 2003

Easily the most famous X-Fella, Wolverine's heading our way in an arcade adventure that offers more slashing than you'd get in a free bar's toilets. Poisoned and watching his life tick away, you'll have to find an antidote—sharpish. Expect lots of snooping around in Wolverine's past and unravelling the secrets of the dodgy Dept H.

Anticipation rating ❑❑❑❑❑❑



STEEL BATTALION

❑ Publisher Capcom
❑ Developer Capcom
❑ Due Late 2003

A Pacific island, ruled under dictatorship needs overthrowing (in 12 levels, mind) by you and your vertical-tank. There's massive robots in a style only the Japanese know how to pull off. Capcom is making a mech-sim for your Xbox, and to top it off, it's releasing a 40-button joystick to go with it for the ultimate where's-me-elbow-rocket-button experience. Looks sexier than a six-figure salary.

Anticipation rating ❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



PANZER DRAGOON ORTA

❑ Publisher Sega
❑ Developer Smilebit
❑ Due October

Another hotly awaited conversion, this time from a critically acclaimed Sega Saturn series, *Panzer Dragoon* is essentially an aerial combat game. You take out flying and grounded foe atop a fire-spitting dragon. This version allows you to morph between three dragon shapes mid-flight and adjust your ride's speed. Prepare for frantic action.

Anticipation rating ❑❑❑❑❑❑



DEAD TO RIGHTS

❑ Publisher Namco
❑ Developer Namco
❑ Due September

A *Max Payne*-style third-person shooter, *Dead To Rights* is inspired by dark Hong Kong action movies and features tons of gun action. You'll also be able to batter opponents with your paws and nab their weapons before they bat an eyelid. It features murder, intrigue, lashings of violence and a new take on bullet time.

Anticipation rating ❑❑❑❑❑❑

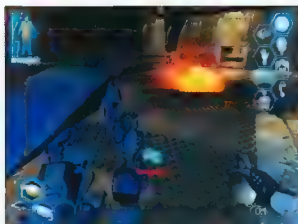


BRUTE FORCE

❑ Publisher Microsoft
❑ Developer Digital Anvil
❑ Due November

Playing as a squad of four hard-as-iron futuristic warriors, each with special skills and weapons, *Brute Force* is a sci-fi adventure you can play several different ways. Either apply stealth, squad tactics or lock and load to blast your way through the opposition across six worlds. *Halo*-esque co-operative and death match modes could make this a winner.

Anticipation rating ❑❑❑❑❑❑



Xbox ONLY!
You'll not see this stunning sequel on PS2 or Gamecube—this is just for us. Get in.



deus ex 2: the invisible war

❑ Publisher Eidos ❑ Developer Ion Storm ❑ Due Late 2003



Deus Ex is without doubt one of the greatest games of all time, and the sequel is shaping up to one of those games you want to give a kiss and a cuddle

A wonderful blend of action, stealth and role-playing that's set in a complete immersive and original cyber-gothic future. You'll be able to pick one of four genetically engineered secret agents and unravel a government conspiracy.

With the next gen *Unreal* engine powering the proceedings, and a physics system to rival *Halo's*, it was the most technically impressive game at E3.

Anticipation rating ██████████



MECH ASSAULT

❑ Publisher Microsoft
❑ Developer Day 1 Studios
❑ Due November

Most mech games jam you in the hulk of your metal beast, but *Mech Assault* gives you a third-person view as you blast the hell out of anything that moves, or even threatens to. Destroy everything from piddling infantrymen to 40 storey buildings and even hook up with 'friends' in far flung places for Internet play. Otherwise, grab a friend, split the screen and open fire.

Anticipation rating ██████████



HALO 2

❑ Publisher Microsoft
❑ Developer Bungie
❑ Due TBA

The most beautifully crafted space-opera in history is currently having its stage swept for another tale of Humanity versus Covenant in a Flood ridden universe. A whole new range of multi traction vehicles (including snow sleds) will be dropped on the battlefield while the player gets their choice of gun turret. Most exciting of all is the promise of online action. Can you imagine the whole globe wrapped up inside a *Halo* deathmatch war? Nor can we. Soon, we won't have to.

Anticipation rating ██████████

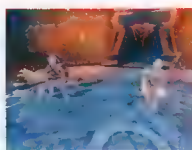


OPERATION FLASHPOINT: COLD WAR CRISIS

❑ Publisher Codemasters
❑ Developer Bohemia Interactive
❑ Due November

Converted from the hardcore cold war PC shooter, *Operation Flashpoint* is about as gritty and templing as war gets. The Xbox version incorporates the resistance add-on so you can play as either a NATO peacekeeper or a down-trodden resistor, taking up arms when you hear your country has been invaded on the radio. Drive every vehicle. Fear every bullet.

Anticipation rating ██████████

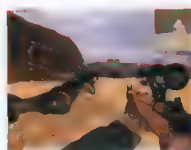


FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

❑ Publisher Vivendi
❑ Developer Smeal Software
❑ Due Autumn

Tolkien's incredibly successful book's been squeezed into a Xbox game. An arcade adventure following Gandalf, Frodo and Aragorn as they roam the badly infested plains using magic spells and even hand to hand combat, if you're a fan of the books you'll be in troll's heaven.

Anticipation rating ██████████



BATTLEFIELD 1942

❑ Publisher EA
❑ Developer Digital Illusions
❑ Due Winter

Yet more WW2 action, only this time you'll be able to get to grips with every single vehicle that was used. Bomber planes, super guns and even huge battleships will be on hand to help you on the battlefields, which take in everything from the Pacific seas to the deserts of North Africa. Looks excellent.

Anticipation rating ██████████



HITMAN 2

❑ Publisher Eidos
❑ Developer IO Interactive
❑ Due September

As a genetically modified assassin living it up in retirement on a quiet Italian vineyard you start *Hitman 2* as the person most likely to star in a videogame. And sure enough, you're soon taking out flower delivery men, golf clubbing fat businessmen and sniping at hapless victims from monastery rooftops. *Hitman 2* looks set to cause a real stir.

Anticipation rating ██████████



metal gear solid 2: substance

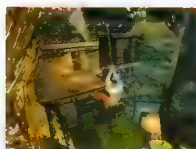
❑ Publisher Konami ❑ Developer Konami ❑ Due April 2003



We were first to report on the existence of Xbox MGS—there was no way PS2 owners were getting Snake all to themselves. At last, after months of will-it-won't-it, it's finally been announced that it will.

Konami is promising huge extras from *MGS2: Sons of Liberty* where you take Snake on another grand tale of espionage and terror. The PS2 version was hailed as the greatest game that machine had to offer—the sneaking about and the vast array of weapons and enemy soldiers controlled by incredibly advanced AI had people the world over taking sickies and losing sleep. A gameplaying dream come true.

Anticipation rating **★★★★★★★★**



INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB

❑ Publisher Activision
❑ Developer The Collective
❑ Due Autumn

The coolest antiques collector in leather's bringing his snake hating habits our way in the shape of an arcade adventure. Inads and Nazis are after a pearl that can alter people minds, buried in China's first emperors tomb. Punch, whip and shoot your way through exotic locations to make sure the pearl rolls into your pocket first.

Anticipation rating **★★★★★★**



MINORITY REPORT

❑ Publisher Activision
❑ Developer Treyarch
❑ Due TBA

Starring Tom Cruise, Spielberg's summer blockbuster *Minority Report* is heading to Xbox courtesy of the same developers that brought us *Spider-Man*. The film's about future-telling crime prevention cops where Tom Cruise gets framed for a crime he wouldn't have committed. The game will turn the film's plot into a blanket and wrap it around *Spider-Man*'s platform beat-'em-up engine, all nice and warm.

Anticipation rating **★★★★★★**



ENTER THE MATRIX

❑ Publisher Infogrames
❑ Developer Shiny
❑ Due May 2003

Shrouded in mystery, but eagerly awaited, *Enter The Matrix* looks set to be an action adventure epic based on the unique universe of the films. It will coincide with the release of movies *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions* next spring. Rumours abound that a massively multiplayer *Matrix* game is also on the way.

Anticipation rating **★★★★★★**



MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 2

❑ Publisher Infogrames
❑ Developer In-house
❑ Due 2003

It might have disappeared off the radar, but *Mission Impossible 2* will be a key game next year, putting you in control of Ethan Hunt and his crack techno lackeys, mirroring the events of the 2000 film. The game is not, however, expected to follow the plot of the movie exactly, so a name change seems imminent.

Anticipation rating **★★★★★★**



THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS

❑ Publisher EA
❑ Developer In-house
❑ Due November

Play as Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli in this third-person slaughter-house that pitches you into the midst of mass battles. The action-packed scraps are filled with dramatic moments and desperate combat that echoes *Braveheart*'s most brutal moments. You'll battle Sauron and the orich hordes in ten locations from the films. Picking the right character for the fight at hand will be crucial.

Anticipation rating **★★★★★★**

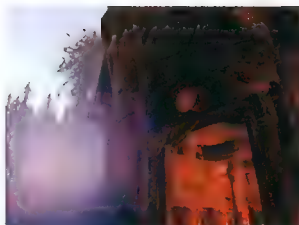


THE THING

❑ Publisher Vivendi
❑ Developer Universal
❑ Due Late 2002

Based on the classic horror movie, *The Thing* tests your powers of puzzle solving and monster blasting, but that's not all. Your crew of fellow scientists will get terrified and paranoid, fearing you're infected by the monsters. Keep them happy by keeping them warm and well lit. Gain their trust by nailing baddies. Cool.

Anticipation rating **★★★★★★**



project ego

❑ Publisher Microsoft ❑ Developer Big Blue Box ❑ Due Spring 2003



Touted as the greatest RPG ever, and certainly the most hotly anticipated game of its type, Project Ego lets you undertake an epic adventure, scarring your character physically and mentally along the way

From the age of 17 to 70 you'll bid to safeguard the future of Albion. Forget collecting shields, you'll hone tons of skills, learning to ride horses and steal chickens. Eat too many pies and you'll get fat. Abuse peasants and you'll be hated. This is a quest to carve out a legend as much as it is a battle against the forces of evil.

Project Ego is the brain spurge of Peter Molyneux (*Populous*, *Black & White*) and will feature real time combat and dazzling magic for added spice. Sweet.

Anticipation rating ██████████



SHENMUE II

❑ Publisher Sega
❑ Developer Sega
❑ Due November

A stunning RPG sequel from legendary Sega developer Yu Suzuki (*OutRun*, *Hang On*). You play Ryo Hazuki as time ebbs slowly from day to night in Tokyo. Talk to thousands of residents going about their daily business and kick ten shades of hell out of Thads in real time combat. Rhythmic action sections mean the cut-scenes are interactive.

Anticipation rating ██████████



BC

❑ Publisher Microsoft
❑ Developer Intrepid
❑ Due Spring 2003

Like *Project Ego*, *BC* is designed to generate a breathing world that reacts to your presence and in which you feel you can do just about anything you like. The aim of the game is to lead a tribe away from predatory dinosaurs by picking up new members, teaching them survival skills and moving to a safe valley. Sounds fantastic.

Anticipation rating ██████████



BLACK & WHITE: NEXT GENERATION

❑ Publisher Microsoft
❑ Developer Lionhead
❑ Due 2003

Another from the Peter Molyneux God sim range, *Black & White* lets you choose to rule your people benevolently or with malice. Using gargantuan creatures, who embody your power, you help and punish your people to rule over the world. Go on quests, battle rival beasts from zebras to orang-utans and generally kick god ass.

Anticipation rating ██████████



STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

❑ Publisher Activision
❑ Developer Bioware
❑ Due October

Another tale of Jedi supremacy, only this time set 4,000 years before *New Hope*. The people behind *Baldur's Gate* are applying their RPG talents to a game that'll have Yoda's floating powers and Princess Leia's sweetheart visuals. Sprawling adventuring mixed with laser-related action should relegate the dreadful *Obi-Wan* into the Ewok league.

Anticipation rating ██████████



PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

❑ Publisher Sega
❑ Developer Sonic Team
❑ Due 2003

Doing away with the conventional restrictions of a strong plot, *Phantasy Star Online* is an online RPG that lets you team up with mates on the web to kick seven shades out of hordes of enemies. Driven on by a desire to improve your character and buy increasingly devastating weapons, you'll help weaker friends against terrifying enemies.

Anticipation rating ██████████



JURASSIC PARK: PROJECT GENESIS

❑ Publisher Vivendi
❑ Developer Universal
❑ Due October

Build and maintain a living dinosaur museum and try to keep the visitors off the menu in this *Theme Park*-style management strategy game. When your charges get loose simply pull out your blunderbuss and take 'em down from a chopper. *Project Genesis* will feature 15 levels and a raft of jazzy pens, secure enclosures and other attractions.

Anticipation rating ██████████

GEAR SHIFT!

The Colin McRae titles on PlayStation were awesome, but this baby simply blows them away...

colin mcrae rally 3

❑ Publisher Codemasters ❑ Developer Codemasters ❑ Due September



The greatest rally game of all time is currently having its engine tuned for the Xbox. We were the first to see it in action. Impressed is not the word, flabbergasted was more our response.

Every details imaginable has been recreated to give the most authentic rally experience imaginable (short of actually doing it for real) and with Colin himself aiding the development they've obviously trying to make it as real as possible.

The physics and handling have all be upgraded and the photo-realistic graphics make it look like you're actually watching the telly—the snow levels look absolutely fantastic. This could even take the mighty *Project Gotham's* crown as king Xbox racer.

Anticipation rating ❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



GRAND PRIX 4

❑ Publisher Infogrames
❑ Developer Microprose

❑ Due September
Crammond's fourth outing will be his most astonishing yet. Every F1 detail we could want has been recreated so playing through the world championship will be as realistic as being in it. Almost. Handling so deep you'll keep improving forever and an Xbox-only, two-player, split-screen GP4 will be as Grand as a piano and more Prit than the Tory party.

Anticipation rating
❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



TOCA RACE DRIVER

❑ Publisher Codemasters
❑ Developer Codemasters
❑ Due 2003

The next instalment of TOCA will either turn out to be a classic mix of driving and storytelling, or a classic example of a mad middle-aged woman who dresses her boiled eggs in little tuxedos, getting a job as games designer. Murder, betrayal and revenge mixed in with the Touring Car driving that played like a dream on the PS1. Heads will roll if it turns out to be an egg in a tuxedo...

Anticipation rating
❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



CRAZY TAXI 3: HIGH ROLLER

❑ Publisher Sega
❑ Developer Hitmaker
❑ Due Autumn

The Sega smash that had taxi ranks the world over singing and dancing is about to pull out for its third fare. With an all-new night level set in a Las Vegas style city, new cabbies and a whole host of bizarre characters to pick up, this could be the craziest taxi of them all.

Anticipation rating
❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



QUANTUM REDSHIFT

❑ Publisher Microsoft
❑ Developer Curly Monsters
❑ Due December

Xbox's answer to Wipeout Fusion is a mind-meltingly fast futuristic racer taking you through five levels of hyper speed until you reach the ultimate 'Quantum Redshift' and dye your kecks brown at over 900mph. Take on three friends split-screen and there won't be much of the 16 tracks left once you've let rip with killer weapons such as tidal waves and nukes. Bring it on.

Anticipation rating
❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



MIDTOWN MADNESS

❑ Publisher Microsoft
❑ Developer Digital Illusions
❑ Due December

Blast through Paris and Washington in 50 missions as you choose from 14 careers ranging from limo driver to secret agent to pizza boy. As you tear one of 30 licenced vehicles around pedestrian packed streets watch out for secret areas and short cuts. This is racing at it's most hysterically insane, and you'll even be able to play online. Christmas never seemed so far away...

Anticipation rating
❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑



SEGA GT 2002

❑ Publisher Sega
❑ Developer Sega
❑ Due Autumn

Sega's answer to Gran Turismo 3 is currently being fine tuned for an Xbox release. Following on from its Dreamcast prequel, GT promises to use the Xbox's engine to create the most complete driving experience we've seen yet where you race for cash to buy new cars. With crisp handling, a build your own car mode and a large selection of classic cars and licences to collect, this could well be the racer of the year.

Anticipation rating
❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

and then some...



status:

genius

Blinx's time tampering gameplay is utterly revolutionary. So clever, so original, and best of all—it's so much fun!



blinx: the timesweeper

❑ Publisher Microsoft ❑ Developer Artoon ❑ Due November

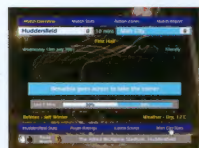


Stunning. That's what *Blinx* is. A stunning platform game in which you play a cat-thing who can alter time to advance his cause. Fall down a pit and you can simply hit the rewind button to jump back up. Can't be bothered to walk a tedious section of the map? Hit fast forward and skip it! It gets better...

Imagine recording a quick burst of bad guy bashing, then rewinding your efforts, pressing play and letting your past alter ego do the fighting while your present self hops about collecting goodies. That just one amazing set piece in *Blinx*. Later on you'll pull the same trick to bounce yourself over a wall on a see-saw. Clever or what?

Should be a gaming milestone.

Anticipation rating **❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑**



CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 4

❑ Publisher Eidos
❑ Developer Sports Interactive
❑ Due Early 2003

The long-awaited, all-new version of *Championship Manager*—the stat-based footie management sim—is not far off. Featuring tons more player agent involvement, heaps of extra features and most importantly a brand new 2D moving match engine, this could be the game that dumps your girlfriend for you. Not everyone's cup of murky hot water, though.

Anticipation rating **❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑**



CLUB FOOTBALL/LMA MANAGER 2003

❑ Publisher Codemasters
❑ Developer Codemasters
❑ Due October

Codemasters is showing some balls with its forthcoming football double bill. Arcade footie, *Club Football*, will come wrapped in 15 different club licenses so unless you support Melgaville Thursday, your tribe should be catered for. They're also taking *Champ Man 01/02* on with a much more user friendly management game. It should be an interesting head-to-head...

Anticipation rating **❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑**



SOUL CALIBUR 2

❑ Publisher Namco
❑ Developer Namco
❑ Due Spring 2003

We confidently predict that this beat-'em-up sequel to a Dreamcast classic will wet on *Dead Or Alive 3*. It's a slick, sword-based battler with a furiously addictive single-player mode—traipse around continents unlocking devilish game modes and tons of hidden extras. The swollen arenas and beautifully motion captured characters should dazzle you. How long until spring?

Anticipation rating **❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑**

and finally...

If that lot doesn't moisten your whistle (demanding aren't you?), there are tons more killer games on their way. Plus, Microsoft is jamming \$2 billion into its online plans for Xbox Live, which launches worldwide in October with every online title supporting the Voice Communicator so you can scold your foes over the Internet. *Halo Online* will join *Amped 2*, *Project Gotham Racing 2* and *Rallisport Challenge 2*. They'll all be online, and you can bet your bottom dollar that *Dead Or Alive 4*, *Abe* and a job lot of other blockbusters will too. What else is coming? How about extreme sports winners such as *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*

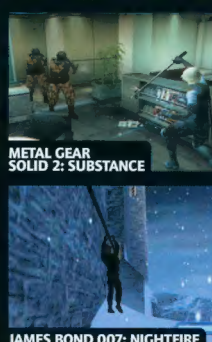
4, *Dave Mirra XXX*, *Mat Hoffman Pro BMX* Or *Toelam And Earl*, *OutRun 2*, *Barbarian* and *Shinobi*... all of which head a staggering line-up of revival games...

They're all there, as are action spectaculars such as *Panzer Dragoon*, *Ninja Gaiden* (from the *Dead Or Alive* people) and *Dino Crisis 3*. Grapplers *WWE Raw*, *WWE Raw 2* and *Legends Of Wrestling 2* are in the pipeline too. Throw in longer range prospects like *Quake IV*, *Thief 3*, *Shenmue III* and further installments of the *Metal Gear Solid* series and it becomes blindingly clear that Xbox is going to be fed the richest game meat. Can't wait. **X**

75 HOT NEW XBOX GAMES!



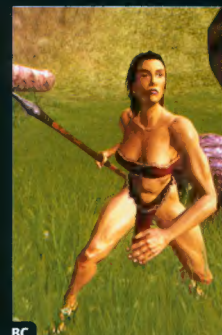
BLINX: THE TIME SWEEPER



METAL GEAR
SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE



BLACK & WHITE: NEXT GENERATION



BC



HALO 2



TUROK EVOLUTION



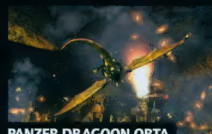
ANDY MCNAB: TEAM SAS



COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3



COUNTER-STRIKE



PANZER DRAGON ORTA



PHANTASY STAR ONLINE



THE THING



TOCA RACE DRIVER



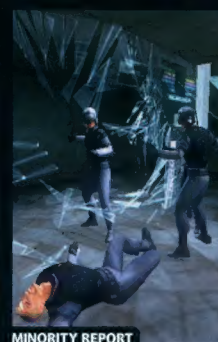
SHENMUE II



JEDI KNIGHT 2: JEDI OUTCAST



UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP



MINORITY REPORT



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